GATEWAY SEMINARY-BAY AREA
3 0008 00006 9234

THE BAPTIST PRINCIPLE

W. C. WILKINSON, D.D.

SUNDAY SCHOOL
of the
First Baptist Church
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

2.65

822

THE

BAPTIST PRINCIPLE

IN ITS APPLICATION TO

BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BY

WILLIAM CLEAVER WILKINSON, D. D.

PHILADELPHIA:
AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,
1420 CHESTNUT STREET.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1881, by the
AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

WESTCOTT & THOMSON,
Stereotypers and Electrotypers, Philada.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

THE PRINCIPLE DEFINED..... 7

CHAPTER II.

OBEDIENCE AND THE SPIRIT OF OBEDIENCE..... 14

CHAPTER III.

WHICH? THE FACT OR THE ACT? RITUALISM OR OBEDIENCE?..... 21

CHAPTER IV.

THE TWO ORDINANCES APPOINTING BAPTISM. THE ORDINANCE "BAPTIZE"..... 32

CHAPTER V.

THE TWO ORDINANCES APPOINTING BAPTISM (CONTINUED). THE ORDINANCE "BE BAPTIZED"..... 40

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONTEXT AS YOU UNDERSTAND IT..... 47

CHAPTER VII.

PAGE

THE CONTEXT AS WE UNDERSTAND IT..... 56

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GREAT COMMISSION: WHAT IT TEACHES CONCERNING BAPTISM. I. THE MEANING OF THE EXPRESSION, "TEACH ALL NATIONS"..... 63

CHAPTER IX.

THE GREAT COMMISSION: WHAT IT TEACHES CONCERNING BAPTISM. II. THE RELATION BETWEEN "DISCIPLING" AND "BAPTIZING"..... 71

CHAPTER X.

OBEDIENCE AND COMMON SENSE..... 78

CHAPTER XI.

THE ARGUMENT FROM COMMON SENSE..... 84

CHAPTER XII.

A MODERN PSEUDO-APOSTOLIC EPISTLE..... 92

CHAPTER XIII.

BAPTISM IN SYMBOLS..... 99

CHAPTER XIV.

SYMBOLS IN BAPTISM..... 114

CHAPTER XV.

PAGE

BIBLICAL "BELITTLING" OF BAPTISM 135

CHAPTER XVI.

A TALK WITH CHRISTIANS NOT BAPTISTS 145

CHAPTER XVII.

SOME CLASSICAL PROOF-TEXTS FOR INFANT BAPTISM 153

CHAPTER XVIII.

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY'S *OBITER DICTUM* ON INFANT BAPTISM 164

CHAPTER XIX.

HOW INFANT BAPTISM PREPARED FOR THE PAPACY 179

CHAPTER XX.

HOW BAPTIST PRACTICE WOULD HAVE PREVENTED THE PAPACY 186

CHAPTER XXI.

SCRIPTURAL INFANT BAPTISM 194

CHAPTER XXII.

WHAT "CLOSE COMMUNION" REALLY IS 199

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONSTRUCTIVE BAPTISM AND CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNION. 206

CHAPTER XXIV.

PAGE

THE SENTIMENTAL VIEW OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.... 212

CHAPTER XXV.

"CLOSE COMMUNION" AS A METHOD OF PROPAGANDISM. 218

CHAPTER XXVI.

BAPTIST VERNACULAR..... 223

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE CURRENT BAPTIST CRISIS..... 231

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE FUTURE OF "OPEN COMMUNION" AMONG AMERICAN BAPTISTS..... 239

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION HYGIENICALLY CONSIDERED..... 2 7

322

THE BAPTIST PRINCIPLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRINCIPLE DEFINED.

THE true organizing principle of Baptist churches may be stated in three words: it is OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST. An essential part of obedience to Christ consists in persuading to obey him. Christ said, "Be baptized." This, therefore, is one of his commandments. To "be baptized" is, so far, obedience. But Christ said also, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." This is another of his commandments. To "teach" to obey is obedience. Obedience in this full sense—that is, to obey and to teach to obey—is the mission of Baptists.

We insist upon baptism, not because it is a rite, but because it is an ordinance. It is not the baptism so much as it is the obedience that concerns us. To have been baptized is, comparatively, nothing; to have obeyed is, comparatively, all. Not to "be baptized," but to obey in being baptized, is what the Baptist principle requires. The Baptist principle of full obedience to Christ requires this, first, of us ourselves, and then requires us to require it, secondly, of others. The obligation to

obey in being baptized ourselves is imperative, but no less imperative is the obligation to obey in teaching others also to obey in being baptized. The duty of teaching obedience is equal with the duty of obeying —is, indeed, identical with it. Our principle of obedience to Christ makes us, first, Baptists ourselves, and then immediately sets us to making Baptists of others. If we cease to seek proselytes, it is because we, so far, cease to be Baptists. We become Baptists and we become propagandists of Baptist views by one and the same almighty creative act of God. The principle of obedience to Christ makes us, simultaneously and inseparably, both the one and the other.

Baptists, therefore, misunderstand their own position, and suffer their position to be misunderstood by others, when they consider themselves or suffer themselves to be considered merely or mainly the champions of immersion for baptism. Immersion for baptism Baptists unwaveringly believe in; but immersion for baptism is not the Baptists' reason for existing as a distinct denomination of Christians. It is not for baptism according to a particular definition that they stand, so much as it is for obedience in baptism according to some definition. But it is not for obedience in baptism according to any definition, even according to the true definition, that Baptists stand. What Baptists stand for is obedience to Christ in everything—in baptism, certainly; but in all other points not less. Their organizing principle is the principle of universal obedience. This principle includes baptism; but it does not exhaust itself in baptism. If, just now, baptism seems to be dispro-

portionately prominent in Baptist inculcation, it is because of a reason that is destined, as we trust, to be temporary. There is no reason for our being known by the name "Baptists" except that so many Christians still fail of obedience to Christ in baptism. I do not care to say fail of being baptized, or, more exactly, of having been baptized; but fail of obedience in baptism. Our name "Baptists" is a provisional one. We accept it for the time from our brethren. When our brethren accept from us—or, better, from our Lord (both theirs and ours)—the principle of obedience to Christ, they and we together may be contented with the simple common name of "Christians."

"But how," it may be asked, "does this Baptist principle of obedience to Christ apply to the Baptist practice of restricted communion? There is no commandment—is there?—of Christ that forbids Baptists to sit down at the Lord's Supper with Pædobaptists." Certainly, I answer, there is no such explicit commandment. This is true, on the one hand; but it is equally true, on the other, that there is no commandment that enjoins the intercommunion in question. On both sides alike explicit commandment is wanting. We are left to infer the will of Christ. To infer the will of Christ, I say; for we are not left to consult our own will. The principle of obedience forbids that. Now, what is the obviously-implied will of Christ?

"Repent and be baptized," says Christ. (I make no discrimination in authority between what Christ says with his own mouth and what he says by the mouth of an apostle.) Every one that "repents"—that is,

every one that obeys Christ's first commandment; in a single word, every "convert"—is directed next and in immediate sequel to be "baptized." Then follow many other commandments of obligation to be habitually obeyed; among them—or, rather, besides them—one of a ritual nature, to be often (occasionally, perhaps periodically) but not habitually obeyed. This last commandment, being not moral but ceremonial in its quality, and of occasional rather than habitual obligation, is, in reason as in fact, placed subsequent to the command, "Repent." This every one admits. But not less, both in fact and in reason, it is also placed subsequent to the command, "Be baptized." If repenting must precede the Lord's Supper, being baptized likewise must, as well. The command, "Be baptized," precedes the command to partake of the Supper as they occur in Scripture, exactly as does the command, "Repent." So much for the order of Scripture. As for the order of reason, the rite which symbolizes creation, beginning, birth—namely, the rite of baptism—of course precedes the rite which symbolizes sustenance, continuance, nurture. Plainly, therefore, the implied will of Christ is, First baptism, afterward the Supper.

Now, to the spirit of obedience the clearly implied will of Christ is just as binding as his expressed will is. True, there is no distinct commandment, Be baptized before you come to the Supper; but so there is no distinct commandment, Repent before you come to the Supper. Christ's will, however, is clear as to both points, and no less clear as to the one point than as to

the other. The principle of obedience requires us to act accordingly.

But, still further, the principle of obedience requires us to exert our influence to induce others to act accordingly. Now suppose a case. I meet a Christian man that has never obeyed the ordinance, "Be baptized." He may have been sprinkled, he may even have been immersed, in his infancy; but he has never, in any plain, simple, straightforward sense of the word, *obeyed* the ordinance, "Be baptized;" that is to say, being addressed by Christ in the imperative "Be baptized," he has never once met that imperative with the obedient "I will," but has always replied, "I have been." He has, therefore, never obeyed Christ, in that particular command. I, a Baptist, meet such a man. I say to him, "Come, sit with me at the Lord's Table"—that is, I invite him to do what I believe to be inconsistent with the will of Christ. How does that "teach" him to fulfil Christ's will? How does that comport with my principle of obedience? But he says to me, "My conscience is satisfied." I am obliged to reply, "The command is not, 'Satisfy your conscience,' but, 'Be baptized.' I shall not interfere with your satisfying your conscience—indeed, I shall try to enlighten your conscience, that you may have an enlightened conscience to satisfy; but, meantime, surely I cannot invite you to do what I believe to be inconsistent with Christ's will—what I should not be conscience-clear in doing myself."

On the other hand, the same man invites me to sit with him at the Lord's Table. My sitting at the

Lord's Table on some suitable occasion is an act of obedience, because I am so commanded. My sitting with him, on his invitation, at the Lord's Table is not an act of obedience, because I am not so commanded. But if my sitting thus with him should signify approval of his disregard of Christ's will, in not having previously obeyed in being baptized, why, I should be guilty of disobedience myself. And if my act did not signify approval of his course, what good result of fellowship or of brotherly love—what good result of any sort—would be gained?

The fact is that, as Baptists could not conscientiously partake themselves of the Supper without previously obeying the command, "Be baptized," so they cannot, expressly or impliedly, countenance the partaking of it by others without the same previous obedience. They cannot invite another to disregard what they believe to be the will of Christ, any more than they can disregard that will themselves. They cannot accept an invitation to join another in an act which, on that other's part, involves disregard of Christ's will, any more than they could by word of mouth approve the disregard involved. The act itself would virtually approve the disregard unless accompanied by an explanation and a protest. The protest and the explanation, if given, would be drowned and lost in the louder eloquence of the approving act. The only consistent thing for Baptists is evidently to abstain from any implication of themselves in an act which involves disregard of Christ's will. The practice of "restricted communion" is simply such a

course of abstinence. "Free communion" could be significant of nothing but withdrawal of protest and silent approbation. "Restricted communion" has in it nothing offensive but the disapproval and protest that it contains. We dare not retract this solemn negative act and signal of fidelity to our Lord and to our brethren. We are sorry to give offence—we like to be liked; but *noblesse oblige*. Relationship to Christ imposes obligations; the principle of obedience to Christ makes us as much afraid to countenance disregard of Christ's will on the part of others as to be guilty ourselves of the disregard. We wish to see our brethren obey Christ, precisely as we wish to obey Christ ourselves.

The principle of obedience to Christ is the Baptist principle. That principle is at the bottom both of Baptist baptism and of Baptist restriction of the Lord's Supper to the baptized believer; and of the one as much as of the other.

CHAPTER II.

OBEDIENCE AND THE SPIRIT OF OBEDIENCE.

OBEDIENCE and the spirit of obedience—I speak in the sphere of relationship to Christ—are sometimes improperly confounded. They are indeed occasionally the same, but not, by any means, always. They demand from us, therefore, now and then the exercise of a thoughtful discrimination. The distinction between them, when a distinction exists, is not seldom of considerable practical importance.

For purposes of useful discrimination, in life as well as in thought, we may properly distinguish two sorts of obedience to Christ. There is, first, the obedience which consists in accepting Christ as Master. This initial and comprehensive act of obedience is what is generally termed conversion. It is the obedience which that saying requires, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ"—that is, submit to acknowledge that Jesus is your Lord. As respects this inclusive sense of obedience to Christ, the spirit of obedience and obedience are manifestly the same. Having the spirit to submit is submitting. Within the scope of this meaning of obedience there are, in fact, no two things to be talked about, either for discrimination or for identification; there is but the one thing, indifferently

named now obedience and now spirit of obedience. Here, then, no danger exists of injurious mistake in confounding things that differ: for there are no differing things to confound.

But there is a second sense of the expression, Obedience to Christ. In this second sense obedience consists in actually doing particular things, outward or inward, that Christ has commanded. Christ's commandments, however, never are outward merely: they are sometimes inward merely. But if they are outward in part, they are always, at the same time, in part inward.

Two cases, therefore, arise. One case is that of commands that are wholly inward in their nature; the other is that of commands that are partly inward and partly outward. These two cases admit of being clearly distinguished. In the case of commands wholly inward, obedience and the spirit of obedience are identical. Take, for instance, the command, "Rejoice." Here, evidently, having the joyful spirit is precisely the thing commanded. To rejoice and to have the spirit of rejoicing are one and the same thing. A second time, accordingly, we find obedience and the spirit of obedience to be mutually convertible terms. In the case, however, of particular commands that are partly inward and partly outward, we are compelled to establish a distinction. Here two quite separable elements enter into the command, and two severally corresponding elements, also quite separable in thought, enter into the obedience. There is a spirit of the command—that is one element; and there is a

letter of the command—that is another element. So there is, too, a spirit of obedience—that is one element; and there is the actual obeying—that is another element. For full obedience these two elements of course must co-exist. If I have only the spirit to obey, I meet only the spirit of the command. It is needful, besides, to actually obey, in order to discharge a complete obedience. Take an illustration.

Christ says, through an apostle, "Confess your faults one to another." In these words a specific outward act is commanded, involving implicitly a specific inward spirit. Two elements enter into the command, and two elements must enter into the obedience. I have committed, let us say, a fault against a brother. I conceive and cherish the spirit of obedience as to the commanded act of confession. Now, if this obedient spirit in me is genuine and complete, I have already satisfied the spirit of the command before I actually confess; but have I obeyed the command? No, for the command is outward, as well as inward; and I must comply outwardly, as well as inwardly, in order to perfect obedience. Not till I actually confess shall I have obeyed. Obeying must be added to the spirit of obeying to make up obedience.

Does it follow, then, that in such a case I may perhaps have the spirit of obedience—the undoubtedly genuine spirit of obedience—and, after all, not actually obey? Under some circumstances I answer, Yes. An impossibility may have intervened. The brother transgressed against is inaccessible to me for some reason—perhaps through death. The spirit of

the command is now all that obliges me; and my obligation is fulfilled if I exercise the spirit of obedience. If I am physically unable to obey literally, I am free from moral blame for not literally obeying. I do not now disobey, though I fail to obey. But that is not because I exercise the spirit of obedience, and the spirit of obedience is the same as actual obedience, or as good; it is rather because actual obedience is not required of me. Under such circumstances I am not addressed in the outward part of the command. The letter of the command does not speak to me. I am free from disobedience to the letter, not because I have obeyed in the spirit, but because in the letter I was not commanded. Self-evidently, the spirit of obedience does not become obedience by virtue of the fact that obedience is impossible. In short, where a particular act is commanded, the spirit of obedience is *never* commensurate and identical with obedience. In such a case obedience must always be completed by obeying. If obedience is physically impossible, obedience is not morally required. What is then required is repentance for not having obeyed while obedience was still possible, if it ever was possible; but of course I cannot claim that I do render obedience in the mere fact of my repenting that I have not obeyed.

Suppose again. I have misunderstood, we will say, or I have entirely overlooked, the command in question. In this new case I do not obey, and, what is more, I cannot even say that I have cherished the spirit of obedience as regards that particular com-

mand. I have neither obeyed nor had the purpose to obey. Where, now, is my obedience? Evidently, it must be looked for, if anywhere, in my first general act of submitting to Christ as Master. Will this suffice? Will obedience in the gross dispense me from the obligation to obedience in detail? If so, why should Christ ever have issued any specific precepts? The principle that the spirit of obedience in general is sufficient to answer in place of obedience to particular precepts would be Antinomianism pure and simple. No; obedience to a specific injunction cannot be rendered without actually obeying that specific injunction. And if any specific injunction has been either misunderstood or altogether overlooked, then it cannot be claimed that, with reference to that specific injunction, as intended by its author, even the spirit of obedience has been exercised. As before, in the instance of its having become impossible to obey, so now, in the instance of a command being overlooked or misunderstood, I may be forgiven for non-obedience. But, mark, non-obedience is not converted into obedience by the presence of any such mistake, however excusable. Nothing but obeying completes obedience here. And nothing but the spirit that meets a command with a frank and conscious "I will" is even the spirit of obedience with respect to that particular commandment.

Now for an important application. Christ says, "Be baptized." Here a particular act is enjoined, whether he meant sprinkling or pouring or dipping. Let us suppose it uncertain, but it is some *act*. Now, with reference to this commandment—no matter, for the

moment, whether of dipping or pouring or sprinkling—full obedience is not conceivable except as rendered in an *act* performed by the person addressed. The person to be baptized is spoken to (no one else) and commanded to perform an *act*. The act is, being baptized. This *act*, therefore, must be performed by *him*, or no obedience is rendered.

But further. Not only has the person commanded not obeyed unless he has performed the commanded act, but he has not even exercised the spirit of obedience as respects this particular commandment—whether of sprinkling or pouring or dipping—unless he has some time, at least, in his life, met the ordinance, "Be baptized," with the conscious answer, "I will."

Now let the great mass of my Pædobaptist brethren consider candidly for one moment with themselves what position they occupy to-day with respect to the commandment, "Be baptized." Whether the commandment means "be sprinkled," or whatever it means, they not only have not obeyed it, but they have never exercised toward it even the spirit of obe dience. They were baptized (let us suffer the word) when they were infants. Grant it. But certainly they themselves fulfilled no obedience. Nay, they themselves performed no act commanded. The act commanded, on their part, was to submit themselves to baptism, but they did not submit themselves to baptism, much less did they exercise the proper accompanying spirit of obedience. Both the act expressly commanded and the accompanying spirit, commanded by

implication, are wanting to their discharge of obedience to the commandment. The commandment, always obligatory until obeyed, confronts them in the New Testament, "Be baptized." Obedience is not impossible to them. The commandment is not overlooked by them —it is not, as we at present will suppose, misunderstood—but it is not obeyed. It is not even met with the spirit of obedience. It never has been. Our Pædobaptist brethren will not claim that they ever once met Christ's words, "Be baptized," with the inward answer, "I will." They have always said, "I have been," as if what Christ wanted of them was the state, on their part, of having been baptized, instead of the very thing commanded; namely, the act —performed by them in conscious obedience—of being baptized, or, in still other words, the act of intelligently and obediently submitting themselves to baptism! A ceremony never commanded by Christ is allowed, with them, to supplant an ordinance expressly established by Christ. If infant baptism were only a ceremony added and superfluous! but it is made a substitute for a rite ordained by Christ.

I would earnestly ask my Pædobaptist brethren to ponder with themselves what that meaneth: "*Thus have ye made the* COMMANDMENT OF GOD *of none effect by* YOUR TRADITION."

CHAPTER III.

WHICH? THE FACT OR THE ACT?—THAT IS, RITUALISM OR OBEDIENCE?

IT is no doubt often matter of perfectly sincere—and, it must be owned, not unnatural—surprise to Pædobaptists that their Baptist brethren should insist so strongly as they do upon their own distinctive view of the true relation between baptism and repentance. "You Baptists"—this, probably, would reflect the general Pædobaptist state of mind upon the point—"you Baptists say obedience is the great thing. We heartily agree with you. Obedience to Christ you claim to be the Baptist principle. We claim obedience to Christ for our own principle, at the same time that we do not deny it to be yours. We desire, we Pædobaptists, to obey Christ as much as do you. Christ says, 'Be baptized;' and we are baptized. Christ says, 'Repent;' and we have repented. Do we not meet Christ's will? Are we not obedient?"

But I need not have constructed a conjectural statement. A Pædobaptist writer of no mean influence, undertaking to speak on behalf of his Pædobaptist brethren, expressed himself publicly, not long since, upon this very point, in the following words:

"Those baptized in infancy suppose they have obey-

ed the command to 'be baptized.' They know they have exercised the spirit of obedience to it. When the command says, 'Do,' they reply, in filial obedience, 'I do.' When the command says, 'Be,' they reply, in an equally obedient spirit, 'Yea, Lord, I am.'"

This brings the issue between Baptists and Pædobaptists to a point.

Two important mistakes are, as I think, involved in the sentences quoted—one, a mistake respecting the true nature of obedience in general; the other, a mistake respecting the true nature of a certain particular command to be obeyed. Let us consider these mistakes in order.

First, then, I venture to maintain that in the foregoing quotation the spirit of obedience is not truly interpreted. The spirit of obedience does not reply, "I do," or, "I am." It replies, "I will." "I will" is the *invariable* reply of the spirit of obedience. The spirit of obedience does not know how to reply to a command in any other tense than the future. When the command comes with the word "Be," the full reply of the spirit of obedience is, "I will be." When the command comes with the word "Do," the full reply of the spirit of obedience is, "I will do."

To reply to the command "Be," "I am," or to the command "Do," "I do," is to affirm one or the other of the two following things, neither of which belongs to the language of the spirit of obedience—namely, either "This command was not necessary, for I had anticipated it," or else "This command is not obligatory, for I *have* obeyed it." But, as already said, neither

the one nor the other of these two affirmations is the language of the spirit of obedience. To say, "This command was not necessary, for I had anticipated it," is, supposing the command addressed to you, irreverent. It is the language of pride, of self-righteousness. To say, "This command is not obligatory, for I have obeyed it," is right or it is wrong according as to say so is true or false—according, observe, as to say so *is* true or false, but by no means, necessarily, according as you *think* it to be true or false. If to say so is false, it is wrong, whether you think it true or not, though, of course, less wrong if you think it true. On the other hand, if it is true that you have, indeed, once obeyed—once, and for all, the command being of a nature to require but a single obedience—why, then your language is simply the language of sane recollection and of proper self-justification. But, though entirely right language for the case supposed, it yet is not at all the language of the spirit of obedience. The spirit of obedience, I repeat, has but one language. That language can be nothing different: it is for ever, "I WILL." And unless this language—the consenting "I will"—has, at some moment, been spoken in response to the command, whether to "Be" or to "Do," the command has not yet been obeyed.

It is not arrogance for me, a Baptist, to say this. It is certainly far from "contempt." Contempt does not seek to convince: contempt is content with its sneer. And to say this is no claim for myself of omniscience. It is simply a denial to some of my Christian brethren of the attribute of omniscience, even with reference to

themselves—denial implied in a loyal and respectful endeavor on my part to show them that what they have, undoubtedly in good faith, thought to be obedience is not obedience; that what they have honestly believed to be, with themselves, the true spirit of obedience is, in reality, not the spirit of obedience, but something else. I speak to the spirit of obedience in general, assumed to be in the heart of my brethren. I seek to convince that brotherly, that willing, that intelligent, spirit that in one certain particular it has failed to exercise itself. My very attempt implies respect and affection. I should have nothing to say on the point on which I am saying so much if I did not believe that at heart my brethren desired to obey. Let us have the mind of Christ, whatever it is. But we need the mind of Christ to find the mind of Christ. How helpless we are! But how rich in help!

In the second place, as to the true nature of the particular command. Does the command, "Be baptized," require something done, merely—an *opus operatum*—or, rather, the doing of something? Which is it, the *fact* or the *act?* Does the command mean, "Make sure that you be in the condition of one who at some time in the past has been baptized," "Secure the *fact* of having been baptized;" or does it mean, "Become baptized," "Have yourself baptized," "Submit yourself to baptism," "Perform the *act* of being baptized"? This is the alternative. According as we choose here, we decide absolutely whether persons baptized in their infancy may be said thus to have met the will of Christ. If Christ's will is simply that the state of having once

been baptized shall be enjoyed by every Christian somehow, but not necessarily through the voluntary procurement of the subject, why, then the person baptized unawares in his infancy may be said to meet Christ's will. If, however, Christ's will be that every Christian shall consciously and purposely perform an *act* in his own baptism, why, evidently the person baptized in helpless infancy has not therein met Christ's will; and he does not meet it until he deliberately has himself baptized. The question admits of no other alternative. Let us see. (It is constantly to be borne in mind that there is no point raised here as to what true baptism is, whether immersion or sprinkling. The present argument would stand just the same if the command read "Be sprinkled," instead of "Be baptized.")

Happily, the Greek language is less liable than is our own to any ambiguity here. Our expression "Be baptized" (or "sprinkled") of course most naturally means "Have yourself baptized" (or "sprinkled"). But, then, it conceivably might mean, "Be, or remain, in a condition of having been baptized." This sense, no doubt, is somewhat violent. But it is not absolutely excluded. If a command were issued in English in the terms "Be baptized," there would, let us acknowledge, be just a possible chance for the doubt whether one who had at some time involuntarily been baptized might not fulfil the command by simply remaining of consent (as he, however, could, indeed, not help remaining), in that sense, a baptized person. But the Greek imperative employed for the command "Be baptized" does not allow an alternative. It means one thing—one thing

only—and can mean nothing else. The question now is, What is that thing?

To express the very unlikely, the wellnigh solecistic, idea, "Be a baptized person," the Greek would appropriate a peculiar form of the verb. It would use an imperative of the *perfect* tense, either in its simple form, or, perhaps more naturally, in a compound form of it, made up of two parts, one part a perfect passive participle meaning "having been baptized," and the other part the simple imperative of the verb "be." The expression, in whichever form, would therefore exactly say, "Be having been baptized," "Have been baptized," or "Be a baptized person." Is it probable that such a command as this ever proceeded from God? Still, to this command, supposed real, a person who had been baptized in infancy might claim that he is obedient in virtue of agreeing now, in his will, to what happened once without his will. If there were any such divine command as the one supposed, I grant that to such a command the spirit of obedience might almost, by exception, adopt a foreign, a non-vernacular, language, and return for answer, "I am," instead of her vernacular "I will."

But for the easier and more probable meaning, "Be baptized"—that is, "Become baptized," "Procure yourself to be baptized," "Have yourself baptized"—the Greek has a different form of expression. For this meaning it uses the simple aorist imperative. This imperative commands an act—an act conceived as occurring at a point of time, and at that point completed and done with. Consequences may follow, a

condition resulting from the act may be inevitable; such condition, however, such consequences, the imperative does not contemplate or imply. The bare act, that alone, separate from every state, concomitant, or resultant, is all that the form of the verb itself contains or implies. There is, accordingly, no room for doubt, since all ambiguity is excluded.

Now, it is this particular form of the verb, the simple aorist imperative, that is used for the command, "Be baptized." An act, therefore, is commanded. The circumstance that the command is in the passive voice is, of course, entirely irrelevant. A *command* not requiring an *act* of obedience is "unthinkable," this equally whether the command be grammatically active or passive. "Be baptized," as a command, at least means "Submit to be baptized." This submitting is an act, and that act is obedience. Without the willing performance of an act on the part of the person addressed in the command, the command is not obeyed. The sincere and earnest Pædobaptist has but to ask himself the question, "Have I ever performed the act commanded?"—remembering, at the same time, conscientiously, that the act commanded is the act of being, or becoming, baptized, not the act, if that were possible, of *having* been baptized—in order to determine with himself whether he has ever obeyed the command. The act required is that of submitting yourself to baptism. Did you ever submit yourself to baptism? The command being, "Submit yourself to baptism," you cannot reply, "I am." The reply does not fit the command. The only obedient reply

possible is "I will." Have *you* at any time returned this reply?

You may rejoin—as, of course, unless you are an exceptional Pædobaptist (that is, unless you were sprinkled on *conversion*), I cannot conceive but, in honesty, you must—"No, I never did, acting of my own accord, submit myself to baptism. I never consciously took the posture of purposed actual obedience to the command. This, indeed, is the truth, and I frankly confess it." You go farther, and say, "But I do not acknowledge that I am therefore disobedient. The truth of the matter is, I do not consider myself addressed in the command, 'Be baptized.' If I considered myself addressed in the command, I should certainly perform the act commanded, and so render my obedience. As it is, I do not obey, because I do not feel commanded. It is no disobedience not to obey if one is not commanded."

This reply to the argument of the present chapter is entirely intelligible. But the reply, let it be closely observed, admits that the command, "Be baptized," is not *obeyed* any longer by Pædobaptists in general—being not obeyed because not obligatory; being not obligatory because not intended for persons baptized in their infancy. But that it is not intended for such persons is pure and absolute assumption, and assumption not only without scriptural reason in its favor, but without rational plausibility. If there had been a clause of exception, express or implied, inserted in the command—if the command had read, for instance, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, *unless*

you shall have been previously baptized in your infancy, in which case you must still repent, indeed, but you need not be baptized"—then the Pædobaptist practice would require only one thing further, a somewhat serious thing, to be sure—namely, to show that sprinkling is baptism—in order to complete its own justification. But no such clause of exception occurs in the text itself of the command, nor in any form is contained elsewhere in Scripture whence it might be transferred and attached.

"Yes, but," it is objected, "your implied demand that there should be an explicit clause of exception in favor of persons baptized in their infancy is unreasonable. There was introduced no clause of exception like what you construct, for the sufficient reason that there were then no persons that had been baptized in their infancy to whom it could apply."

Of course, I admit this statement of fact. I go beyond merely admitting it—I insist upon it; and I point out, further, a noteworthy additional fact. It is this: that at the very moment, of all others, in young church history, when infant baptism, as an ordinance of Christ, should seem likely to have appeared, if ever it was to appear at all, there is observable a pregnant silence on the subject in the Scripture narrative. Not quite absolute silence, either, if strong adverse implication may be deemed to break absolute silence. For these cautionary words occur, reporting the sequel of results that attended Peter's Pentecostal exhortation: "*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized.*" Since, however, there was confessedly,

on this occasion, no class of persons baptized in infancy to whom an exceptive clause based on that infant baptism could apply, it ought, at the very least, if Pædobaptist usage is to find valid support, to be shown from Scripture that such a class of persons was divinely desired and intended to arise. (Else the absence of the exceptive clause may best be accounted for by the divinely desired and intended *non*-existence of any class supposed to be excepted.) And how, I ask, can divine desire and intention of this kind—namely, that there should arise a class of persons baptized in their infancy—be shown? In no way whatsoever, I am confident.

But, in default of indication to that effect, supposing still that a class of persons to whom exception, on such a basis, was desired and intended by God to arise, how, then, I ask, should not the forecast of the Holy Spirit have provided for their future case by implying somewhere, somehow, in Scripture, an exemption in their favor from the obligation of the command, *if it be indeed true* that these persons, or any persons, were meant to be exempted?

I have two serious questions to propose:

First, May not the spirit of obedience be deficient sometimes in *not feeling itself obliged*, as much as in not obeying when the obligation is recognized and confessed?

Second, Wherein does a system which scrupulously performs a rite without therein obeying any assignable divine command or therein following any recognizable scriptural precedent; which submits an uncon-

scious object to a ritual observance, as if that ritual observance were the necessary condition of supernatural grace to that object; which ritually manipulates a subject without requiring, or even permitting, that subject so much as to say, "I agree to this ritual;" which, in short, as to one particular thing, and that thing the half of all Christ's positive law, makes everything of ritual, and nothing of obedience, —wherein, I ask, does such a system differ *essentially* from RITUALISM?

CHAPTER IV.

THE TWO ORDINANCES APPOINTING BAPTISM.

THE ORDINANCE "BAPTIZE."

AN ordinance is properly something ordained—that is, commanded. In saying "properly" here, I mean originally, etymologically. An ordinance is, therefore, in its strict first sense a commandment—only that and all that, nothing more and nothing less and nothing else. Let us try changing, accordingly, for a moment, our customary expression, "ordinance of baptism," into the expression used in entitling this chapter. It may yield us some valuable results. The ordinance *of* baptism means the ordinance which consists in baptism. There is in Scripture one ordinance or rite *of* baptism, and but one. There are in Scripture two ordinances or commandments, and but two, *respecting* baptism. The *two* ordinances *respecting* baptism fix the *one* ordinance *of* baptism.

The two scriptural ordinances respecting baptism exist in various forms of statement; but, whatever various forms of statement exist, they contain all of them the same substance. One of the two ordinances directs to "baptize;" the other directs to "be baptized." The ordinance *of* baptism is constituted by these two ordinances *respecting* baptism. Besides these two ordi-

nances respecting baptism, there are in Scripture absolutely no other. Now, in order to determine what is the true ordinance *of* baptism, evidently our just course is to study what are the real scriptural ordinances *respecting* baptism. Let us, then, proceed to examine these. They exist in three—perhaps four—distinguishable kinds of statement.

First, and most direct, there are the imperative sentences respecting baptism uttered by Christ and his apostles. For example: "Teach all nations, baptizing them" (Matt. xxviii. 19); "Repent and be baptized, every one of you" (Acts ii. 38). Second, and scarcely less direct, there are the instructions of Christ and his apostles delivered in the didactic indicative mood. I discriminate this kind of statement to introduce what is perhaps the sole instance of it—namely, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16). I should not insist on this text, for the reason that some —perhaps quite needlessly—doubt its genuineness. Third, there are the authoritative examples of Christ and his inspired disciples contained in the inspired narratives of the New Testament. For example: "Jesus made and *baptized* more disciples than John" (John iv. 1); "And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him" (Acts viii. 38). Fourth, there are the allusions and interpretations and applications—of value in proportion to the remote and incidental nature of their bearing—found in the inspired New Testament Epistles. For example: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. iv. 5); "Know ye not that so many of us as

were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. vi. 3). For the purposes of this chapter we may confine ourselves to the first of these four kinds of statement, comprising those direct imperative sentences of Christ and Christ's apostles in which Christ's will concerning baptism is recorded.

Here, in the first place, are clearly distinguishable two mutually related—in fact, reciprocally complementary—classes of commandment. On the one hand, there is a commandment addressed to a certain order of persons, directing them, on their part, to administer baptism; or, more simply, to baptize. On the other hand, there is a commandment addressed to a certain different order of persons, directing them, on their part, to receive the baptism administered; or, more simply, to be baptized. These two mutually complementary classes of commandment, as I have said, exist in various forms of statement in Scripture; but, essentially, all forms of statement require the same things—namely, on the one side, the act of baptizing; on the other, the act of being baptized.

There might have been other ordinances in Scripture respecting baptism—that is, other ordinances are conceivable—but, in point of fact, no others occur. Hence, "Baptize" and "Be baptized"—or, in other words, "Perform the act of baptizing" and "Perform the act of being baptized"—may truthfully be styled the two scriptural ordinances respecting baptism. There might have been an ordinance, "Have certain persons baptized," but no such ordinance as this exists. There might have been an ordinance, "Be

in the state of having been baptized," but no such ordinance as that exists. The two ordinances, "Perform the *act* of baptism" and "Perform the *act* of being baptized," are the only ordinances to be found, in any form, in Scripture respecting baptism.

We are ready now to look at those two chief places in Scripture where these two sole ordinances respecting baptism occur in their most direct and imperative form. Our object shall be to ascertain the true limits, as to persons and as to perpetuity of the obligation created, of the command or ordinance, "Be baptized."

I divide the question, and confine myself to that branch of it which inquires, "What persons are properly addressed in the commandment, however expressed, 'Be baptized'?" for the reason that this is the really living and important issue involved. The point, "What persons are properly addressed in the commandment, however expressed, 'Baptize'?" excites, and deserves to excite, no special interest. Scripture seems to treat this as a point of little moment. Thus it is incidentally said, in parenthesis, "Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples)." Again, Paul thanks God that he himself baptized none, or almost none, of the church at Corinth, to which he was writing. It is worth noting, however, and it pertains to our purpose, that, while a slight is thus put upon the matter of *who* baptized, there is, at the same time, in both cases, in the very fact that baptizing is mentioned at all, a striking implication of great importance attached, in the mind of the Spirit, to the matter of the baptizing

itself Why was not the statement that Jesus "made disciples" allowed by the evangelist to stand alone as sufficient for the substance of the history? Evidently because baptizing was an inseparable incident of making disciples. Baptizing was important enough to be invariably done, under our Lord's personal ministry, as fast—and, of course, only so fast—as disciples were made, and then important enough, besides, to be distinctly, and, it might almost seem, superfluously, mentioned by the inspired narrator as having been done. Paul's allusion is equally unmistakable proof that baptism, in New-Testament times, clung to discipleship, like shadow to its substance. Nothing can betray more clearly failure to appreciate the proportion and perspective in which baptism appears in Scripture than the disposition sometimes manifested to make baptism seem of trivial consequence. The very passages perverted to favor this notion demonstrate the contrary with inexpugnable implication.

The authoritative expression for that ordinance respecting baptism which directs to administer it is found in the concluding verses of the last chapter of Matthew. Our concern with it here is simply to state clearly the implication it contains as to the persons to whom baptism is proper to be administered. A separate consideration will be given in succeeding chapters to the course of exegesis by which the implication here merely stated is unassailably established. The risen Lord, about now to ascend into heaven, says to his disciples, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son,

and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And, lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

The word "teach," occurring here twice, represents two different and discriminated words in the original Greek. "Teach all nations" means, to use a convenient coinage, "Disciple all nations." The first part, therefore, of the compound commandment is, "Go and convert all men, of whatever nation, into disciples to me." The second part is, "Baptize those thus converted." The third part is, "Teach comprehensive and exact obedience of my commandments to those thus first converted and then baptized." It is a remarkable thing, not to be left out of present regard, that a positive external ceremonial enactment or ordinance should be inserted here in so brief a summary, delivered under circumstances so august and imposing, of apostolic and evangelistic duty. That it is thus inserted is significant of an importance given it in the design of the Lord that, with the prevalent lax instinct and habit, not to say self-sufficient conceit, of disparaging outward observances in religion as barren and indifferent, we should perhaps hardly have anticipated. The church of Christ, we should unhesitatingly predict, will never neglect baptism. And, true enough, the church never has neglected it. That is to say, the church, in all its branches—with the sole exception, so far as I know, of the Friends—has uniformly observed a rite that went by the title of "baptism." The name, at least, has never wanted its honor, if the thing

originally meant by the name has sometimes failed to receive its due of attention.

Christ's disciples, then, were commanded by him, on this farewell occasion, to "disciple" and baptize. We need not here go into the subtleties and refinements of interpretation with which the true sense of the Great Commission, so called, has been perplexed and confused. It is sufficient for the moment to say that the persons put by it under obligation to be baptized were, first, disciples; second, disciples of all nations; third, disciples of every age of the world to the end of time. The duty created of being baptized—that is, of submitting to baptism; not of being in a baptized condition, or, rather, in the condition of having once been baptized—devolved on persons that had first been made disciples; it extended to persons of all nations answering to this description; and it was to remain binding to the end of the age. In short, baptism for disciples, and for no others—for disciples universally, and for disciples perpetually—was commanded in these solemn farewell words of Christ.

We have thus sought to make clear the unquestionable implication contained in the great ordinance of Christ which commands to baptize—the implication contained in it, I mean, respecting the persons upon whom the command was to be obeyed. It was upon persons who had previously been made disciples. Only such, but all such. No question is now raised as to what is the act of being baptized. That doubt may here sleep. The act, whatever it is, of being baptized is incumbent upon disciples. Disciples can be

no other than persons capable of discipleship—that is, persons capable of being taught. Make disciples of, baptize, teach—that is Christ's order; and Christ's order is as binding as the different things are, one by one, which he has set in that order.

But there is a still plainer instruction for us—if instruction can be plainer—in that commandment, complementary to the one thus far chiefly considered, which directly addresses the persons themselves to be baptized. That commandment I reserve for consideration in its due season. It constitutes the second and more important of the two scriptural ordinances respecting baptism. It is the ordinance, "Be baptized."

CHAPTER V.

THE TWO ORDINANCES APPOINTING BAPTISM (CONTINUED).

THE ORDINANCE, "BE BAPTIZED."

THERE are substantially two ordinances, and but two, in Scripture appointing baptism. The first is, "Baptize;" the second is, "Be baptized." The first of these two ordinances I have already examined. I purpose now examining the second.

I undertake my present task with the same object with which I undertook the former. That object is single and simple. It is to ascertain from Scripture on what persons the ordinance "Be baptized" is binding.

Let us go at once to the ordaining words. These we find in the sequel to Peter's Pentecostal discourse. Here they are: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you." This is sufficiently explicit. No Christian doubts that here was created an obligation imperative upon every person addressed by Peter. As to what persons beyond these are bound by the obligation, Baptists and Pædobaptists differ. Baptists say, "All persons capable of understanding them, to whom the words come;" Pædobaptists say, "All such persons, excepting those that may have been baptized in their infancy." The

chief dividing question between Baptists and Pædobaptists is, "Is this exception scriptural?"

This, observe, is not the same as asking, "Is infant baptism scriptural?" That question we will not now disturb; let it sleep. We need ask only, "Is there a class of persons bound by the first part of the command ('Repent and be baptized'), but not bound by the second?"

This is an entirely fair way of stating the question. For the controverted point, as here conceived, is not, "In what way may the obligation, admitted to be binding, be discharged?" but, "Upon what persons is the obligation really binding?" I repeat it, therefore, the living issue in this matter is, "Is there a class of persons bound by one half of the command ('Repent and be baptized'), and not bound by the other half?" That is the true point to be decided.

You, let us suppose, are met by the requirement, "Repent and be baptized." You answer, "As to being baptized, that part is for me already happily accomplished. I was baptized while still an infant. The repenting, however, I have yet to do." This, in effect, is the unconscious language of every destined and hereditary Pædobaptist up to the time of his conversion. At the time of his conversion—that is, be it borne in mind, at the moment when he exercises his very first impulse of obedience toward God—he, instead of obeying a certain perfectly plain command, contents himself with saying, "That command is not binding upon me."

But why, pray, not binding? Not, certainly, be-

cause you have ever obeyed it. For you had never obeyed any command of God until you repented; and as soon as you repented you said, "The command, 'Be baptized,' is not binding upon me." Not, therefore, because you have ever obeyed it, but because, before you exercised, or could exercise, any act whatever of obedience, an incident occurred at which you were, indeed, personally present, but in which you yourself bore no part, except a perfectly passive and unconscious part, and which, of course, now you cannot even remember.

Perhaps, however, you will be disposed to put your answer in another form. You will say, "It is not by the bare fact of my having involuntarily been baptized in infancy that I hold myself discharged from obligation. No; I add now a voluntary element of my own. I intelligently accept that former act of another as my present personal act. This subsequent ratification on my part is my obedience."

But consider. That former act of another which you thus accept was not "being baptized." It was not, therefore—it could not be—obedience on that other's part to the command, "Be baptized." It was with him, if obedience at all, obedience to some command—for instance, "Have this child baptized." For what that other person did was simply having you baptized. The minister, we will say, obeyed the ordinance, "Baptize." Your parents obeyed, suppose, an ordinance, "Have children baptized." The ordinance, "Be baptized," did not on occasion of your infant baptism—and, from the nature of the case, in that transaction it could not—get obeyed at all. You,

accordingly, are placed in this remarkable position: You accept for your obedience to the command, "Be baptized," an act of another, which, if obedience at all on any one's part, must have been obedience to a command substantially in these terms: 'Have this child baptized." God, that is, says to you, "Be baptized;" and you say to God, "I accept for my obedience to this command my parents' act in once having had me baptized." What sort of obedience is this? You accept an act which another performs, but which the words in question, at least, do not command, either to that other or to yourself, or, in fact, to anybody—you accept this different act, performed by some one else, as your own performance of the particular inconvertible act explicitly commanded to you. God says, "Do a specific thing;" and you reply, "Another person has done something else, and I accept that as my obedience."

Or perhaps you will give your reply a still different form. You will say, not, "I accept another's act as my own act," but, "I retrospectively accept my own former irresponsible act in being baptized, while an infant, as my present responsible act; and that is my obedience." But the difficulty here is that, in being baptized when an infant, you did not yourself act at all. You were simply acted upon. There *is* no former act, therefore, of your own that you can now adopt. In this state of the facts what becomes of your obedience? It must be wholly inward and spiritual, and not physical and outward in any part. For there is no outward element, past or present, to which it can attach itself to find completeness.

Your obedience, therefore, if you have, indeed, rendered obedience to the command, "Be baptized," bears no relation whatever to your infant baptism. That transaction has nothing to do with your obedience. Your infant baptism may or may not have been right and scriptural. But, whether right and scriptural or not, it is, at any rate, in no conceivable way related, as obedience, to the command addressing you, and you alone, in the second person, "Be baptized." Your sole obedience, if you may be considered somehow to have obeyed, lies in a certain posture of your mind and will. It consists in saying within yourself, acquiescently and dutifully, "I have been baptized." No bodily act of yours, present or preceding, enters into it. It is all mental and subjective. You obey by inwardly *considering* that you have obeyed.

Reflect, now, a moment on the necessary implications of what you have thus far claimed for yourself. You began by denying that the command, "Be baptized," was obligatory upon you. In the course of giving your reasons for its not being obligatory, you unawares confessed that it was obligatory, and claimed, besides, that you had in one or the other of two ways met its obligation—that is, either you have, by a subsequent act of pure mental adoption, substituted for your own obedience to one command, "Be baptized," what somebody else once did in supposed obedience to a quite other command, "Have infants baptized;" or, if not this, then, by an equally pure mental exercise, you have inwardly put a strictly imaginary former act of your own—imaginary, for, in reality, you performed

no act—in place of a present act commanded, and in virtue of your very course of reply acknowledged by you to be of binding obligation upon you.

Is it likely that our Lord intended a positive external ordinance of his to be thus fulfilled? Does he desire a constructive obedience? By singular and solitary exception does he desire this, particularly in the matter of the commandment, "Be baptized"? And if he does, by what information of Scripture has he made his desire known?

Bringing thus together the two sole scriptural ordinances respecting baptism—namely, "Baptize" and "Be baptized"—and examining them in comparison, we perceive that they have reference to the same class of persons—that they are correlative and complementary, the one answering exactly to the other. Whom Christ bids, on the one hand, "Be baptized." with reference to these it is that, on the other, Christ bids "Baptize." These, and besides these, none. But with reference to these he does not bid "Baptize" until, with reference to the same, he has first bidden "Make them disciples;" as likewise these he does not bid "Be baptized" until the same persons he has first bidden "Repent." If we baptize other persons than these, or if other persons than these are baptized, in either case no obedience is rendered; for in neither case does any command exist to be obeyed. Such baptizing we may, indeed, call the "ordinance of baptism;" but we then use the word "ordinance" in the secondary, derivative sense of "rite" simply. We quite deceive ourselves if we imagine that our rite comes under any scriptural ordinance

that exists respecting baptism. We fulfil a form, but we do not obey an ordinance.

What is ritualism? Is it practising rites without therein obeying divine ordinances?

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONTEXT AS YOU UNDERSTAND IT.

I MEAN the context of the precept, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you"—so much of the context, that is to say, as embraces the promise annexed. That portion of the context is this: "And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." My object in the present chapter is to set forth a certain interpretation of the foregoing words adopted by many Pædobaptists, together with some of the reasons which render that interpretation inadmissible.

First, their interpretation. This, if I rightly apprehend it, is as follows: Peter taught his inquiring hearers that they ought to repent, and then to be baptized. He assures them that thereupon the gift of the Holy Ghost would be imparted to them, but not to them alone. Their obedience would be efficacious to procure—potentially, at least—the same blessing also for their children. In consequence of this relation established between the obedience of parents and spiritual benefits thence accruing to children, a practical duty devolved upon parents—the duty of having their children baptized.

I have, I confess, experienced some difficulty in stating an explanation which seems to me to err so widely from the truth. If, however, I have failed to state the explanation fairly, it has, at least, been from no conscious wish to put it at any avoidable disadvantage. I proceed to mention a few considerations tending, as I think, to show that this explanation is not worthy of the wide acceptance it has gained.

In the first place, the word "children," as here used by Peter, means "posterity," "descendants," in the large, indefinite, remote sense, and not immediate offspring of a second generation. This is matter of general agreement among authorities (see, for example, Robinson's *Lexicon of New-Testament Greek*); but it is further clear from the fact that Peter's word "children" is evidently used by Peter in the same sense with relation to his own audience as was Joel's expression "sons" and "daughters" by Joel with relation to his in the particular prophecy which Peter is engaged in explaining and applying. But Joel's expression is authoritatively interpreted by Peter to refer to those whom he himself is this moment addressing—that is, to descendants of Joel's contemporaries, removed from Joel's time by the space of not less than twenty generations. Joel's expression "sons" and "daughters" did, indeed, include children of the second generation, for it included children of every subsequent generation, beginning from the date of first prophetic fulfilment. It included infant children too, for it included all children; but it did not include infant children *as* infants, but infant children regarded prospectively, regarded in

anticipation—that is, infant children as grown-up children to be; "young men" some of them, "old men" some of them, Joel expressly specifies.

In the second place, if the word "children" here could be admitted, as it manifestly cannot, to mean offspring of a second generation, brothers and sisters of a single family—though it then might, indeed, mean the grown-up children among these—it still could not mean the infant (non-speaking) children while infants additionally; much less the infant children particularly; least of all, the infant children exclusively; for the very sufficient reason that the only "children" had in view by Peter, and by Joel before Peter, were "sons" and "daughters" old enough to "prophesy," to "see visions," and to "dream dreams."

In the third place, Peter no more implies that, if his hearers obey, their "children," old or young, near or remote, should be thereby entitled to peculiar privileges, than he implies that "all that are afar off" should be entitled to peculiar privileges if his hearers obey. It is just as much said, "The promise is to you and to all that are afar off," as it is said, "The promise is to you and to your children." The connection in thought—the connection of cause and consequence—is the same for one case as it is for the other. Whatever effect is taught by this passage to be, through parents' obedience, communicated to their "children," that same effect, the passage equally teaches, is, through these parents' obedience, communicated also to all other persons, without respect to mutual relationship of kindred.

"Ah! but you forget," objects some justly watchful

Pædobaptist; "there is an important qualification added to the last clause. It is said by Peter, 'All that are afar off, *even as many as the Lord our God shall call*.'" Yes, it undoubtedly is. But the limitation thus appended affects equally each one also of the two foregoing clauses. It means, "You, even as many of you as the Lord our God shall call," and, "Your children, even as many of your children as the Lord our God shall call," no less than it means, "All that are afar off, even as many of such as the Lord our God shall call." To suppose that while, on the one hand, with reference to all that are afar off, it means those only who shall be called by God, still, on the other, it means the promise belongs to you and to your children, irrespective of the divine call,—this is clearly inadmissible. No; the call of God is as necessary to one class as it is to either of the others. They all of them need the divine call, and they all need it alike. And when we consider what the divine call spoken of here probably is—that it is "Repent and be baptized"—this consideration alone limits the application of the whole passage, precept and promise together, to such persons only as are naturally capable of receiving a divine call to repentance and baptism. Infants thus, as infants, are completely excluded—not, thank God! as I trust, from Christ's grace and the hope of salvation, but from any possible part in the reference of this particular passage. But, supposing this all to be otherwise, and supposing some transcendent relation to be indeed indicated here as existing between parents and their children in the matter of religion, still, how does

it follow thence that therefore the children should be baptized?—especially how that infant children, but more especially infant children only, should be baptized? The necessity—nay, even the plausibility—of the sequence here is obscure.

A fourth consideration weighing against the current Pædobaptist explanation of this important passage is the following: Peter's immediate hearers were Jews and Jewish proselytes. Now, if Peter held out to them, on behalf of their children, some benefit not made common also to them that were "afar off,"—that is, Gentiles,—how is it that we, Gentiles, can any of us claim a share in such peculiar and exclusive benefit? Peter did not, as I believe, put any difference here between Jew and Gentile in favor of the Jew. But if he did, still we, certainly, sinners of the Gentiles, have no profit of the difference. But to talk of such difference is utterly idle. Nay, the apostle instead at a stroke obliterated difference and made all one in Christ. He proclaimed one gospel, the same to all men, of whatever race, of whatever time. God's call is everywhere and for ever to all men individually, and independently of one another: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you." Nothing that any one else may have done to me or for me or in my name, nothing that I myself ever did *before I repented*, has the least effect to make void the perpetual and untransferable obligation that is mine to obey that indivisible, twofold call of God bidding me "be baptized" as much as it bids me "repent." There is but one conceivable discharge of the obligation; and that discharge is obedience. But

obeyed I have not, obey I cannot, the command, "Be baptized," until I have first repented; for repentance is necessarily the first obedience that apostate man can possibly pay to God.

We resume, and conclude accordingly as follows:

First, no connection—absolutely none whatsoever—productive of consequences affecting other persons than the persons themselves immediately obliged by the commandment is hinted at by Peter in this passage as existing between any two classes referred to in it.

Secondly, supposing, however contrary to fact, that some such connection was implied, still, there is certainly no such connection implied to exist between, for instance, Peter's immediate hearers and their descendants that is not also implied to exist between Peter's immediate hearers and all other persons indiscriminately; for the implying words, if any, are these: "To you, and to your children, and to all," in which "to you" is coupled with "to all" as much as it is coupled with "to your children."

But if—as has, however, been shown to be impossible—there were some such peculiar connection implied between Peter's immediate hearers and their descendants, still this would be a connection with which we of our race could have nothing to do, inasmuch as whatever distinction is made between Jews and Jewish proselytes on the one hand, and Gentiles on the other, is with discrimination, if with any discrimination, exclusively in favor of the former class. If it is indicated here that there is a boundary drawn somewhere within which beneficent consequences may descend from an-

cestors to posterity, then we certainly, as Gentiles ["all that are afar off"], are outside of that boundary; for "to you and to your children" is said by Peter to Jews, as distinguished from Gentiles.

Fourthly, but if, once more, in defiance of all probability—for what is more improbable than that a discrimination in blessing should be instituted, to be instantly abolished?—suppose, I say, it were conceded that the peculiar hereditary consequences imagined, whatever they might be, are, in the intention of the Spirit, transferred, without notice, from Jew to Gentile, or suddenly, and equally without notice, made common to Gentile with Jew, still, the posterity to inherit the consequences would not be immediate children only, brothers and sisters of the next generation, but posterity in the largest sense. Baptism, accordingly, would pertain as a right to all descendants of those first hearers of the gospel, irrespective entirely of the immediate parents from whom the descendants might be sprung.

Fifthly, but if, yet again, immediate children only, and not indefinite posterity, were granted to be meant, and to be meant for Gentiles together with Jews, then the inclusion would be of all children, and not of infant children merely; so that, on this hypothesis, similarly, as soon as a father was converted, baptism instantly would become due to all his children, adult equally with infant.

It thus appears that, in order to find infant baptism contained in this place of Scripture, we have to make a number of impossible suppositions, and end, besides,

in finding much more than we sought, and much more than it is at all agreeable to any of us to find.

But I have yet to state a serious additional difficulty to be surmounted. For, however inclusive we make the scope of the passage for the sake of including infants, we are surprised to discover that from even so wide an inclusion infants are shut out at last; for the connection shows that only such children are thought of by Peter as are capable of speaking to "prophesy." It has been as if a fisherman, seeking to make sure of his draught, had stretched his net until the minnows for the sake of which he drew escaped through the meshes.

But, finally, even were infant baptism, against all these impossibilities, to be regarded as established, it would still remain unproved and improbable that infant baptism was designed by Christ to vacate any part of the commandment, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you."

In contrast with such a difficult, contradictory, self-confuting interpretation of this noble passage of Scripture stands out in bold and simple clearness and strength the self-evidencing true view—namely, that what Peter said to one he said to all: "Repent and be baptized." This message is for you, every one; for your children, every one; and, finally, for those afar off, every one. The same thing, undivided, unchanged, to as many as the Lord our God shall call. The divine call is conveyed in the precept; the precept is, "Repent and be baptized;" the promise appended is, "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The word, to be sure, is

not, "*Without* these two things—repentance and baptism, both of them—you shall *not* receive the Holy Ghost." With repentance only, as we think—even with baptism only, as some think, but not Baptists—many do receive the gift. But the spirit of obedience does not rejoice in your enjoying the promise without fully discharging the precept. The spirit of obedience is a generous spirit, and it does not find God's commandments, any of them, grievous. It rejoices in enjoying, but it rejoices even more, if possible, in obeying.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CONTEXT AS WE UNDERSTAND IT.

AGAIN I mean the context of the precept, "Repent and be baptized." What light does this context throw upon the question of the extent to which the precept preceding is still applicable and obligatory? There is a Baptist and there is a Pædobaptist view of the matter. I seek in this chapter to present the Baptist view.

Pædobaptists, in order to justify their present actual practice in the matter of baptism, have three distinct and independent tasks of proof to perform: First, they must prove that sprinkling is baptism; second, they must prove that Christ meant to have infant children baptized; third, when these two things are done, they must proceed still further to prove that Christ meant to exempt persons thus baptized, without act of their own, in unconscious infancy, from the duty of fulfilling the precept, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you," by being baptized, of their own act on subsequent repentance.

As to the first of these three tasks of proof incumbent on Pædobaptists—that, namely, which deals with the question, What act is commanded in the commandment 'Be baptized'?"—I have nothing here to say. Let it

be supposed to be admitted for the moment that sprinkling is baptism. I direct my attention exclusively now to the other two questions—namely, *first*, "Did Christ mean that parents should have their infant children baptized?" and, *secondly*, "Did Christ mean that persons who had thus been baptized while infants, on motion of their parents, should not afterward, on their own motion, be baptized in immediate sequel to repentance?"

We are now to seek light on these two questions by examining carefully the appendix to the precept, "Repent and be baptized." It is here proposed, in other words, to consider the precept in the light of the promise appended.

Distinct and independent I call the two questions thus stated; for it by no means follows as a thing of course, infant baptism being supposed clearly made out to be divinely ordained, that therefore infant baptism was divinely intended, in the case of those who have received it, to supersede and displace baptism on repentance. I put the inconsequence thus again, and expressly, for the reason that it seems to me to be a point of some importance, which my Pædobaptist brethren overlook. They content themselves with proving to their own satisfaction that the practice of infant baptism has foundation in Scripture, and they then too easily assume, without even the effort to prove, that such baptism in infancy was meant by Christ to take the place of baptism after repentance, and even to prevent that. But this, surely, is a large assumption; and an assumption, too, I will venture to say

without much plausibility of any kind in its favor. It is, I admit, supposable that a rite of dedication for infant children might have been appointed by Christ to parents, and appointed, too, in the form of a baptism. This, of course, is nowhere in the New Testament said to have happened; but, had it happened, it is then still further quite equally supposable that this was done by Christ without any design on his part to interfere thereby with the subsequent duty of the unconscious subjects of the right to obey, like others, in the true sequence of its parts and in its unshorn completeness, the precept, "Repent and be baptized," which is apparently, by its terms, obligatory upon all. Indeed, this latter supposition is antecedently far more probable than the alternative supposition adopted by Pædobaptists. If circumcision, as Pædobaptists generally maintain, is the analogue and type of infant baptism, then the probability in favor of the substitute supposition here suggested rises almost to the degree of certainty. For those persons, remember, to whom Peter first said, "Repent and be baptized" had—most, if not all of them—been circumcised. Those persons, therefore, according to the accepted Pædobaptist hypothesis, represent that class among us who receive baptism in their infancy. But to these circumcised persons, supposed thus to represent persons baptized in their infancy, Peter said, "Repent and be baptized." Does not Christ by Peter still proclaim to persons who received, suppose, baptism instead of circumcision when they were infants, the same unchanged and uniform summons designed

for all: "Repent and be baptized"? If he does not, how is it made plain that he does not?

But, in the way of studying afresh the real scope and intent of Peter's appendix of promise to precept in addressing his Pentecostal hearers, let us begin by considering the object with which the promise was appended. Why did Peter promise as well as command? His purpose, manifestly, was twofold. First, he wished to encourage his inquiring hearers to do what he bade them do—namely, "Repent and be baptized." To compass this aim, it was natural to remind them of a blessing conditioned upon obedience. On condition of obedience, he said, they too should receive, as he himself, with his fellow-disciples, had received, the gift of the Holy Ghost. By way of confirming this assurance, Peter added that the promise in question—that is, the promise of the Holy Ghost's bestowal—was from the first expressly destined and inscribed to them. He went farther than this, to be sure, and said something more; but thus much completes that part of what he said which had reference directly and exclusively to his hearers themselves.

It might, however, strengthen their sense of certainty in this matter somewhat—might make them feel themselves more unquestionably included within the scope of the promise—if they could know that the promise opened wide its beneficent embrace to include not them alone, but with them all generations of their posterity, and even all races of men. Peter, accordingly, goes on to say that the prophet Joel's

promise of the Holy Ghost, ready now to be bestowed upon condition of obedience to the command, "Repent and be baptized," was valid, not simply to them, but to their descendants as well, and, in fact, to all men, however far removed from the likelihood of such a blessing—all men to whom the divine summons, "Repent and be baptized," should come. "For the promise"—these are his words—"is to you and to your children [posterity, descendants], and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

We thus exhaust, so I believe, the primary purpose of these words--that purpose of them which concerned Peter's immediate hearers only. This primary purpose was simply to encourage those hearers to obedience.

But a larger purpose of the words remains to be noted. Peter was that day using the power of the keys. He was opening the dispensation of the gospel, the new dispensation presided over by the Holy Ghost. It became him, therefore, to adapt his instructions to universal application. This, no doubt, was, as regarded the future, the paramount, though for a moment the secondary, purpose with which Peter appended the promise to his precept. In accordance with this purpose, he employed a form of language expressly directed to show that what he, Peter, thus taught inquiring Jewish listeners to the gospel at Jerusalem was what inquiring listeners to the gospel, Jewish or Gentile, should thenceforth, everywhere and always, by whatsoever preacher, be

taught. The following, in effect, is his language: "You ask us what you shall do. I reply, 'Repent and be baptized.' On this condition you shall be made—you together with us—partakers of the Holy Ghost. This is what the prophet Joel meant in the prediction of which I have been speaking. The prophet Joel predicted to the Israelites of his time that their sons and their daughters—their children, their descendants, that is to say—should receive an effusion of the Holy Ghost inspiring them to prophesy. This prediction is now in course of fulfilment before your eyes. What you this day behold in us, the apostles of Jesus, is a part of that fulfilment. But only a part, for the promise is also to you as well as to us. Repent and be baptized, and the blessing extends at once to you. Nor is this the whole: the same is true for your descendants as for yourselves. The precept, 'Repent and be baptized,' the promise, 'You shall then receive the Holy Ghost,' are valid still for your posterity. The blessing and the condition of the blessing alike are for generation after generation succeeding you in a continuous line of descent till the end. But yet more: the application widens as well as lengthens. It goes on all sides to Gentiles at the same time that it goes forward down to successive generations of Jews—one and the same thing to all men. Let every man 'repent and be baptized,' and every man thereupon shall receive the Holy Ghost—the same promise, on the same terms, of the same blessing, to all people of all times and all races."

Such, substantially, was, as I understand it, the pur-

port of Peter's reply to his inquiring Pentecostal hearers. Unless the light thus gathered from the promise to be reflected upon the precept has suffered some distortion from the straightness of the truth in passing through the lens of my interpretation, it is perfectly manifest that, however unmistakably present elsewhere in Scripture it may be, infant baptism is in no way, even remotely, to be detected in this particular passage. The explanation given seems to me to possess the self-evidencing power which belongs only to truth. But a different explanation is widely, not to say generally, accepted among Pædobaptists, which on that account deserves serious and careful consideration. This different explanation, with the reasons—at least, some of them—which I regard as conclusive against it, will form the topic of a succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GREAT COMMISSION: WHAT IT TEACHES CONCERNING BAPTISM.

I.

THE MEANING OF THE EXPRESSION, "TEACH ALL NATIONS."

THE Great Commission—so called—contained in the concluding verses of Matthew's Gospel, consists of three parts: *First*, a kind of preface very briefly expressed; *secondly*, a treble command; and *thirdly*, a confirmatory promise. We have here to do only with the command. The command is in the following language: "Teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The Greek for the first verb "teach" is a word peculiar, in this sense of it, to the New Testament. Ordinarily, the verb means "to *be* a disciple" or "learner." It here means "to *make* a disciple" or "learner." We may awkwardly imitate the word by translating "disciple" instead of "teach."

Two questions now arise bearing upon the subject proposed in the present discussion: *First*, Exactly what is the import of the word "disciple," here used

as a transitive verb? *Secondly*, What is the relation between the action expressed by the imperative "disciple" and the actions expressed by the two participles following — namely, "baptizing," "teaching"? These two questions will respectively form the topics of the present chapter and a chapter to follow.

Our first question, then, is, Precisely what are we to understand by the word "disciple," here used as a verb? This, it may be remarked, is a point which the student familiar only with English is as well qualified to determine as is the Greek scholar. There is quite the same relation between the English noun and its derivative verb as between the two words corresponding in the original Greek. Convert the English noun "disciple" into a transitive verb, and you have done almost exactly what Jesus did with the Greek noun equivalent when he said, "Disciple all the nations." He meant "Make disciples of"—just that, and nothing else.

But now what does the noun "disciple" mean in the New-Testament use of it? What the noun means will, of course, fix what the verb means. One of two things a "disciple" must be: either, *first*, a person who simply listens to a teacher for the purpose of understanding what the teacher says; or else, *secondly*, a person who, besides seeking to understand a teacher, takes the further step of adopting what the teacher teaches as true. Of these two senses, which does the word "disciple" bear in the New Testament? The answer is clear: The latter. "Disciple" in the New Testament means one who — ostensibly, at least—

adopts the teachings of a teacher as true. If there is any exception to this rule, I, at least, know of none. At any rate, in the immense majority of instances the rule holds good. The discrimination between the loose and the more strict application of the word is even very sharp. Take a few instances. Jesus had been speaking to large audiences. "The *disciples*," it is then recorded, "came and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto *them* in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto *you* to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." This is in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew. Here the distinction is tensely drawn between one class of hearers and another class. Of these two classes, one class only are called "disciples," though both classes alike were hearers, in the sense of listening to the teacher and seeking to understand what he taught. Again, in the fifteenth chapter of the same Gospel, "Jesus called his *disciples* unto him and said, I have compassion on the *multitude*, because they continue with me now three days and have nothing to eat." Here is a case in which the general mass of the Lord's hearers, although they had been with him in that relation three days, are markedly distinguished from his "disciples," strictly so called. Luke, in his fourteenth chapter, reports Christ speaking as follows: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." From these instances (and the number might be multiplied, while

no instances, I believe, can be adduced looking in a different direction) it will appear that the word "disciple," in the New-Testament use of it, meant, not a casual hearer of Christ, and not even a hearer that may have heard him day after day, but a hearer that, besides hearing him, at least professed acceptance of his doctrines. We hence gather that to "disciple" persons to a teacher meant to make those persons accept that teacher's doctrine for truth. If we examine the few other cases in which the same verb "disciple" occurs in the New Testament in a similar use, we shall find confirmation of this view. Thus in the fourteenth chapter of the Acts we meet with this: "And when they had evangelized [preached the gospel to] that city and had discipled many." Here the general idea of proclaiming the gospel to multitudes of hearers is discriminated from the particular idea of "discipling" certain ones out of the multitudes. We conclude with great confidence that when, in the Great Commission, Christ bade, "Disciple all the nations," his thought was not of *proclaiming* the gospel universally, so much as it was of everywhere making men *accept* the gospel. To be sure, the gospel was to be universally proclaimed. The idea of universality is contained in the expression "all the nations." Still, the thing that was to be universal is not proclaiming, but discipling. All men were embraced in the command; no doubt of that. Not, however, as persons to be made hearers merely of the gospel; rather as persons to be made *obedient* hearers of the gospel—that is, disciples in the strict sense. Christ did not here

enjoin *preaching* to all men, but *discipling* all men. Not the means—namely, preaching, teaching—but the end—namely, discipling, converting—was chiefly in his mind. It would not satisfy the conception of Christ for the apostles to run through the world of mankind *announcing* the gospel. Christ said, "Disciple all the nations," not in the sense of making all the nations learn what he had taught, but in the sense of making all the nations believe what he had taught, and behave themselves accordingly. Make real disciples, make converted men, make Christians of all men. Not, Preach to everybody for the sake of making everybody Christians; but, Make everybody Christians. The intentness of the Lord's mind led him to enjoin the end, not the means. His thought overleaped the intervening steps of method and went at once to the result. He says nothing of how the thing was to be done. All he says is, Do the thing. And the thing he says Do is to make true, believing, obedient disciples of all men. Thus much is rendered certain by the Saviour's choice of the word "disciple" to express his thought.

We have thus answered our first question—namely, just what is to be understood by the command, "Disciple all the nations." Now, therefore, we are prepared to take up our second question, In what relation do the following participles, "baptizing," "teaching," stand to the principal imperative verb, "disciple"? This second question will be discussed in a separate chapter.

Let it not be supposed that so much care has been

fruitlessly devoted to a barren, mere verbal discussion. We are seeking the thought of Christ in an utterance of his as solemn and important as any recorded in the Bible. It is of supreme moment that we know what he meant. And what he meant in the whole of this weighty commandment depends very greatly upon what he meant in using that one particular word, "disciple," at the outset. The vital relation of that one particular word to the interpretation of what follows will be clearly seen when we come to consider our second question, which, having stated it, I reserve, as already suggested, for subsequent examination.

Before dismissing the question of the true meaning of "disciple," a remark or two may relevantly be made on a possible alternative sense for the word. The sense herein claimed for it may be held, while yet the baptizing is regarded as a means to the accomplishment of the discipling. This, however, is possible only on the presupposition of what is called baptismal regeneration; in other words, the idea that the act of baptizing works a spiritual change in the subject apart from any share of his own in the transaction. It is hardly worth while to argue with a person that takes this view—or, at least, I do not here suppose myself to be in discussion with such a person.

But there is a different sense of the word "disciple," which, if not scriptural and true, is certainly quite conceivable. The word "disciple" may conceivably mean, "Put under tuition," "Bring into the relation of disciple;" as, for instance, a little child may be called the disciple, or pupil, of a teacher whose peculiar teaching

he neither accepts nor rejects, but is simply in course of learning by the will of another and without consent of his own.

This, I repeat, is a perfectly intelligible sense of the word rendered "teach" in the beginning of the Great Commission: "Teach all nations;" "Regard all nations, treat them, as disciples;" "Set them in a course of learning from Christ as Master, and keep them in it." Suppose this definition granted; why, then, go on to baptize? I say "*go on* to baptize;" for, observe, even according to this Pædobaptist definition of the word "teach" or "disciple," the discipling precedes the baptizing. "We treat people as disciples *by* baptizing them," Pædobaptists say. Admitted. You baptize them *as* disciples. They *are* disciples, and you signify their discipleship by baptizing them.

There is thus, after all, no issue between Baptists and Pædobaptists as to the true order in time of discipleship and baptism. Both sides agree that discipleship is first. The real point in dispute is, What is discipleship, in Christ's sense of the word "disciple," as here employed? Did Christ mean by "Disciple all nations," merely this: "Put all nations under Christian instruction"? If so, then Baptists surely are wrong; but if so, the Pædobaptists surely are very inconsistent—that is to say, all Pædobaptists except Roman Catholics. Christ's Great Commission to his church, if the word in it, "Teach," "Make disciples of," means simply, "Bring under Christian tuition," has never been obeyed, in its true logical inclusion, by any body of professed Christians but Roman Catholics. We, all of

us on this hypothesis, ought to baptize, as Rome does, by the nation, and not by the individual. Baptism should not be limited to infants—much less to infants having Christian parents—but be extended without qualification to all persons of every age that hear Christian instruction. This, and nothing short of this, is the logic of Pædobaptist exegesis. Here are the very words of a late quasi-authoritative apology for infant baptism: "And so there is nothing to show that 'discipling' the nations would not be wisely and thoroughly accomplished by 'baptizing' and 'teaching' them in the very way in which other Christian denominations than Baptists [by eminence, the Church of Rome] now do—through preaching the gospel and by infant and adult baptism."

In the presence of such doctrine who is prepared to say that Baptist testimony, resisting unto "strict communion," is not still needed on behalf of the principle of a regenerate church-membership? Sincere, thoughtful students of the New Testament will surely perceive that the question of the present chapter—namely, the real meaning of Christ's word "disciple" in the Great Commission—is still one of vital moment to the Christian church.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GREAT COMMISSION: WHAT IT TEACHES CONCERNING BAPTISM.

II.

THE RELATION BETWEEN "DISCIPLING" AND "BAPTIZING."

WE have examined the Great Commission to settle the meaning of "disciple" in it; we are now to consider the relation between "discipling" and "baptizing," as this relation is exhibited in the same passage of Scripture. It will necessarily be a somewhat close and careful grammatical discussion, that upon which we thus enter. The discussion will not, however, be such as not to be quite intelligible to any average reader that will give his thought patiently to the subject.

In the Greek, as in the English, the three specifications which occur in the Great Commission are expressed by a verb followed by two participles. The verb is "disciple;" the participles are "baptizing," "teaching." Whereas, we have discussed a question of etymology to ascertain the precise sense of "disciple," we come now to discuss a question of syntax to ascertain the true relation in which the two participles stand to the verb that precedes them.

If we confine our consideration to the verb and the participles alone, we shall find that, according to the laws of Greek grammar, any one of four distinguishable views may fairly be maintained.

First, it may be held that the participles express the *means* by which the action of the principal verb is to be effected, as if the passage read, "Disciple all the nations by baptizing them and by teaching them." Such is the view very commonly, if not prevailingly, maintained by Pædobaptist authorities. This view lends color of plausibility to the Pædobaptist doctrine concerning the proper order of precedence as between baptism and faith. If discipling is to be accomplished by baptizing as a means, why clearly we can no longer deny that baptizing may justly sometimes precede faith in the subject. There even remains no reason why baptism should not be given to infants. In short, let the Pædobaptist interpretation of this passage once be shown to be not merely possible, but certain, and the Baptist position is effectually and finally overthrown. At least, under such an interpretation, I see but one way of still saving the Baptist position. That way is to hold that "baptizing" is used here by the Lord in a figure, to mean, not, primarily, the rite of baptism, but, primarily, what "baptizing" always presupposed —namely, the previous conversion of the subject. When a bereaved parent says, "I have buried my children," the meaning is not, primarily, burial, but death presupposed in burial. No one can maintain that this figure would be at all violent or unnatural here; indeed, there is much to be said in favor of so

understanding the language. Thus would be explained what surely needs explanation—the occurrence of allusion to an outward rite in the Great Commission. But this interpretation, however the word "baptizing" be understood, cannot be demonstrated as certain, for the following reason at least, that there are several other interpretations equally tenable with that—equally tenable, I mean, on grounds of the Greek syntax for participles in connection with verbs. But there are other grammatical considerations than the law of the Greek participles—one consideration in particular about to be adduced—which make strongly against the Pædobaptist interpretation of this great passage. I advert, meanwhile, in passing, to the absence of a connective between the participles. Note, it is not said, "baptizing *and* teaching," but, "baptizing, teaching." This asyndeton, or omission of the conjunction, is not natural if the *means* of the discipling were intended to be pointed out in the participles. Let us insert a phrase unmistakably expressive of this instrumental idea, and we shall see: "Disciple all the nations by means of baptizing, teaching." You feel at once that if the means were intended thus to be prescribed, it would have been far more natural to say, "Disciple all the nations by means of baptizing *and* teaching." The *and*, in fact, seems to me so much a matter of course, a thing so inevitable, between clauses designed in such a case to express means or method, that the absence of it is alone of weight enough to decide my own judgment against that interpretation which makes the participles in these verses instrumental. Before bringing forward

an additional circumstance looking in the same direction, and before giving what I think to be the true interpretation of the passage, I wish, for the sake of full presentation, to state the two other interpretations of it which the law of Greek participles used in connection with finite forms of the verb would, considered exclusively by itself, recognize as admissible. One of these makes the verb "disciple" first give, in general, the action which the two participles following then divide into constituent parts. According to this interpretation, the sense is, "Disciple all the nations"—that is, to be more explicit, "Baptize them," "teach them." The absence of the conjunction weighs as strongly against this interpretation as it does against the interpretation first considered. If the participles had been meant to give the parts—two in number—making up the whole of the action prescribed in "Disciple," there would almost certainly have been between them the connective *and*. It would have read somewhat like this: "Disciple all the nations; by which I mean, 'Baptize them *and* teach them.'"

Once more. It is possible for Greek participles thus connected with a finite verb to express actions *consecutive* to the action of that. Interpreting in accordance with this possibility, we should have the following sense: "Begin by making all the nations disciples; proceed by baptizing these; and complete your work by instructing them to a perfect obedience." That such is indeed substantially the sense of the passage I have no doubt. This, however, is ascertained, not by the necessary relation of the participles to the verb,

but by certain probable considerations to be found both within the passage itself and without. The cases in which the Greek participles are manifestly employed in connection with finite verbs for the purpose of expressing actions consecutive to the actions expressed by the verbs—though such do, I believe, occur—I have not found to be very abundant. For my own part, I do not maintain this view of the present passage, although this view is probably the favorite one with Baptists, as it is also the view most likely to occur to any chance intelligent reader of the English translation.

There is a fourth view—that one which I hold to be the true view—yet to be stated. This fourth view regards the participles as expressing actions not of necessity rigidly consecutive to the action expressed by the imperative verb, but actions connected with it—actions not necessarily constituting together the whole sum of the action expressed by the principal verb, but actions virtually contained in that; in short, this view regards the participles as being what we may call *circumstantial* participles. The asyndeton, or absence of conjunctive word between the participles, strongly favors this view as the one applicable to the present case. The sense is, "Disciple all the nations, not omitting to baptize them, and give them, when discipled and baptized, thorough subsequent indoctrination to obedience." Such, I have little doubt, is the true meaning, and the true grammar as well, of this passage. The first participle, "baptizing," goes with the imperative "Disciple" to complement the meaning

of that. The second participle, "teaching," goes with the whole complex expression, "Disciple, baptizing," to make that complete. The "Disciple" is not complete without the "baptizing," and the "Disciple, baptizing," is not complete without the "teaching." Thus the asyndeton is most naturally accounted for.

And now for another grammatical consideration embraced within the passage itself. "Disciple all the nations," says Christ; "baptizing them," he proceeds. Baptizing whom? "Why, all the nations," the English reader promptly replies; "there is no antecedent for 'them' except 'all the nations.'" This seems quite clear to the reader of the English Bible. But the student of the Greek Testament knows that, in absolute strictness of grammatical concord, the "them" cannot have "all the nations" for its antecedent. The difference of gender forbids. "Nations" is in Greek a neuter noun, while "them" is a masculine pronoun. Now, undoubtedly the grammar of the biblical Greek permits us to reason that the sense of the noun rather than its technical gender may dictate the gender of the pronoun representing it. But in the present instance it is worthy of note that the Greek verb "Disciple" is made from a masculine noun. This Greek verb "Disciple," accordingly, with its masculine noun "disciple," implicit in its very form as well as its sense, may have furnished to the thought of the Saviour the conception which dictated the pronoun after "baptizing" and after "teaching." Christ was not thinking of "all the nations," but of "the disciples" made out of "all the nations," when he said "baptizing them." Those out

of all the nations who had been made disciples in that strict sense of the word already described were, then, to be first baptized and afterward taught. The form of the Greek pronoun *them* helps to make it probable that what in the Saviour's mind supplied the pronoun was not the idea of all the nations spoken of as the object of the discipling, but rather the idea of the disciples thus to be made out from all the nations. Who, then, are to be baptized? Why, those who have been discipled. If literally "all the nations," still all the nations conceived as having been rendered disciples—disciples in the deep and strict sense of that word.

Thus does this passage fall easily and naturally into perfect accord with the teaching of the rest of revelation on the subject of belief before baptism.

It is not too much to say that there is nothing in Scripture that, rightly understood, has even the look of favoring Pædobaptism.

CHAPTER X.

OBEDIENCE AND COMMON SENSE.

BAPTISTS believe strongly in obedience, but not less strongly they believe also in common sense: they could not be the scripturalists they are if they did not. "Common sense" is a broad mark branded everywhere on the face of the Bible and inseparably water-lined into its texture. Unless a man has some common sense and uses it, he cannot know the Bible aright. Other things being equal, the more common sense a man has, the better he will know his Bible.

These commonplace remarks are suggested by a fresh attempt lately made to turn the Baptist position by showing that the spirit of obedience is as good to discharge Pædobaptists from blame for being sprinkled when Christ says, "Be baptized," as it is to discharge Baptists from blame for not insisting on a baptized baptizer in their act of submitting to baptism. "It is clearly implied"—so, in the spirit of the *argumentum ad hominem*, our opponents sometimes pleasantly assure us—"it is clearly implied in the Bible to be Christ's will that the baptizer should himself have been baptized, and you Baptists insist, you know, that 'to the spirit of obedience the clearly-implied will of Christ is just as binding as his expressed will is.' How,

then, are not Baptists as far wrong to receive baptism from persons not in an unbroken succession of the properly baptized, beginning with the apostles, as Pædobaptists are in making infant sprinkling do for adult immersion?" But, of course, the real meaning of this is that neither Baptists nor Pædobaptists are wrong at all in the matter. Both parties are quite right, provided only they think they are quite right. It is sufficient, equally for them both, to do what they think is sufficient. Think you obey, and you do obey. Such is the easy gospel of obedience preached by these brethren.

Now, the common sense of the matter seems to me to be this: Christ says, "Be baptized." He does not say, "Be baptized" by such or such a person, or by a person so or so qualified. In fact, there are clear indications that the person who, in *baptizing*, is comparatively indifferent. Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples. Paul did not baptize with his own hands, but by the hands of some anonymous baptizers. The person who, in *being baptized*, is of prime consequence. This person is to have repented and believed. Of course, there are decent limits within which indifference as to the baptizer must be confined. These limits common sense and the spirit of obedience appoint. Thus much is implied—nothing more—as to the will of Christ in this manner.

Most certainly, all persons who baptize ought themselves to be baptized persons. But this is true also of all other persons whatever as well. That we should insist, in all proper ways, on everybody's obedience at

this point is unquestionable. That we should insist in the particular way of refusing to be baptized by a man without that qualification on his part is by no means so certain. It is to be left to the spirit of obedience and common sense to decide.

There may be a distinction not without a difference between having the spirit to do what you *think* is commanded and having the spirit to do what actually *is* commanded. If a man tells us, "Put oil on the fire," and we understand him, "Put water on the fire," and go about doing this, we cannot be said to have the spirit of putting on oil, when we are actually with intelligent purpose putting on water. If, on the other hand, we rightly understand the direction, but seize the vessel of water, inadvertently mistaking it for the vessel of oil, then we may truthfully be said to have the spirit of putting on oil, even when, as matter of fact, we do put on water.

Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as the spirit to obey a particular command unless that command is rightly understood. There may, indeed, be a general wish to do what a master requires; but, self-evidently, there can be no disposition to do a particular thing commanded when that particular thing is either not known or not understood. In this sense, unless the command, "Be baptized," is understood as the Lord meant it, there is no spirit of obedience exercised toward that exact command. All which is perhaps barren, but it is certainly axiomatic.

Here, however, is something equally axiomatic, and not barren. If the command is, "Do an act," and you

not only have never done it, but have never had the least intention of doing it, then that command you have never met either with obedience or with even the spirit of obedience. This is the situation in which the great mass of all Pædobaptists stand with reference to the command, "Be baptized." An *act* is commanded which they have never performed, and which they have not now, and which they never had, the smallest purpose to perform. It is not uncharitable, therefore—it is simply true—to say that toward this commandment of an *act* from them themselves they have never exercised the spirit of obedience. They have not done what is "sufficient"—they have not even done what they think is "sufficient"—for they have never done anything whatever toward the obeying of this commandment. They have simply *said*, "I am baptized;" for they cannot say that they ever *did* anything whatever in the premises. A particular act is commanded to *them*, and they say, "Some one else once did something else." And this is claimed to be not only the spirit of obedience, but obedience itself!

A Pædobaptist editor lately quoted from a Baptist editor as follows:

"If a person giving evidence of piety who has been solemnly immersed, on a profession of his faith, by an administrator believed by the candidate to be authorized to perform the rite, and who was satisfied with his baptism, applied for membership, we have recommended his reception by the church. . . . He had obeyed Christ."

The Pædobaptist editor then exclaimed:

"But behold a snag! If the baptism is sufficient baptism because it is believed by the subject of it to be sufficient, then why is not sprinkling sufficient baptism when it is believed by the subject of it to be sufficient? . . . Still further, is not infant baptism sufficient when it is believed by the subject of it to be suffiient? . . . There can be no doubt of it."

Now, is it possible that this was unconscious legerdemain? Probably; for that Pædobaptist editor meant to be candid and honorable, at the same time that he would by no means fail to be bright and ingenious. But observe. The Baptist editor describes a baptism circumstantially; it is a profession of faith, it is solemnly administered, it is immersion, it is done by a person believed to be qualified; and the point is incidentally added that the subject is satisfied with his baptism. Hereupon the critic, dropping everything that is essential, and holding only the one thing that is incidental, proceeds to infer that, on the same principle, anything or nothing is "sufficient" if the subject is "satisfied." For in the case of one sprinkled in infancy the subject has done nothing—absolutely nothing—but at an indefinite later period to be "satisfied" with having done nothing. And this is "obedience" and the "answer of a good conscience"!

Truly, a little less metaphysics and a little more common sense would improve the quality of our obedience.

If Christ had said, "Be baptized by one duly baptized," then, certainly, he would have laid a heavy burden on his babes, to find out so difficult a point

beyond the possibility of an error; but the duty of obedience would still be plain. As it is, he has simply bidden, "Be baptized." The way of obedience is for those bidden to rise up and obey, not to sit still and be "satisfied."

CHAPTER XI.

THE ARGUMENT FROM COMMON SENSE.

THE questions which divide Baptists and Pædobaptists are very simple questions: What is baptism? Who should be baptized? Two simpler questions it would be hard to devise. The plain common sense of any chance man you should meet might safely be trusted to answer them. Prepossessions aside, and the Bible, the English Bible, the only resort, there could scarcely be different answers. Different answers, however, there are, for resort is made elsewhere than to the Bible, and prepossessions are not put aside. Let us return once more to the Bible alone, and let us, if we can, put aside our prepossessions. To endeavor to rid the candid and intelligent Pædobaptist mind of certain natural but misleading misconceptions concerning the Baptist position, and then to exhibit that position according to fact and in the clearest possible light, according to what I may call the method of common sense, will be the object of the present chapter.

I seek to have my brother take my point of view; it will be but fair to begin by showing my brother that I can take his point of view. This, then, I suppose to be the customary Pædobaptist way of considering the questions at issue. It is as if our Pædobaptist brethren said

to us, "Granted now, good friends, that your peculiar views are right: still, why, pray, make such manifold ado about them? Wherein can you find their extraordinary value and significance? There you are, occupying the position of separatists. Separatists for what? Why—who would believe it?—for a mere question, forsooth, of more water or less, how applied and when, in the matter of baptism. Except in those trifles you are one with the great Christian world. Is it, can it be, worth while, on points such as these, which concern only a ritual observance at most, to rend the body of Christ and to hold yourselves aloof from your brethren in an attitude of protest and rebuke? Are there not weightier matters of Christ's law that should attract and absorb your attention? It really does seem to us all a kind of pettiness and narrowness in you, this literalizing and ritualizing spirit on your part, ill becoming a body of Christians in whom we are delighted to recognize, in other regards, so many claims on our respect and affection."

If I have thus succeeded at all in taking the point of view from which our Pædobaptist brethren are accustomed to regard our position, I may now, perhaps, ask them to take the point of view from which we are accustomed to regard our position ourselves.

And at the outset, in the way of preface, it needs to be said that their great organizing principle—of obedience to Christ—would make Baptists stand for any points of Christ's commandment, even if those points were indeed such and so small and so apparently insignificant as their Pædobaptist brethren not unnatu-

rally conceive the points insisted upon by Baptists respecting baptism to be. But those points of Christ's commandment which make us Baptists are not such, and they are not so small and they are not so insignificant.

They are not such; for it is not true that Baptists stickle for *quantity* of water in baptism. Quantity of water, more or less, is to us as much a matter of indifference as it is to our Pædobaptist brethren. We ask, as they do, simply for so much as may suffice to perform the act. We are amply satisfied with more or with less, as occasion serves, provided only we have enough to accomplish the ordinance, "Be baptized." The sufficient supply may be found in an ocean or it may be found in a baptistery. The one quantity contents us just as well as the other.

In the next place, it is not at all with Baptists a question of *mode*. The mode of the act is, like the quantity of water used in performing the act, to us a point of total unconcern. We resemble our Pædobaptist brethren in accounting one mode of baptism equally valid with another. Like them, we seek simply to perform the act in whatever mode seems to us best to become the decorum of the solemn occasion. We may baptize the obedient subject with his face downward, to welcome the wave that submerges him; or with his face upward, to receive the smile of the ascended Lord whom he obeys. We may baptize him from an erect or from a kneeling posture. We may baptize him in a single or in a threefold act. Such choices in mode are by no means disapproved by Baptists. We seek

only to obey the command, "Be baptized," in whatever quantity of water may answer that purpose, according to whatever mode of administration judgment or custom may recommend. In how much water, according to what mode,—these matters are of no more moment to us than to others.

Again, as to the time *when*, in baptism, there too we are very much of the same mind with our brethren of other evangelical churches. These all choose, I believe, the earliest convenient moment after the subject is regarded as fit to receive baptism, or, as it is better expressed, to be baptized. Pædobaptists baptize (let us indulge the term) their children as soon as deemed suitable after their children's birth; we observe the same rule. The difference between them and us is that they, in fixing the time of their baptism, reckon from the moment of first, or natural, birth; we, in fixing the time of our baptism, reckon from the moment of second, or spiritual, birth.

In one word, and as plainly as possible, the really great question between Baptists and Pædobaptists is something quite apart and distinct from the points thus far considered. That question is, WHO shall be baptized? not, In how much water? nor, According to what mode? nor yet, At what time? A subordinate question of very considerable importance would still remain after this chief question was answered. Having decided WHO are to be baptized, we should next have to decide WHAT baptism is.

For a moment, however, let baptism be an unknown term. From the form of the word employed, we sim-

ply know that baptism is an action; what action it is remains, we will suppose, wholly indeterminate.

Our first question, then, is, WHO shall be baptized? But why should any be baptized? Evidently, because a commandment of Christ exists to that effect; and, evidently, for no other reason in the world. In what form of language is the commandment expressed? In various forms of language, of one agreeing import, but most directly, most simply, most briefly, and most explicitly in a single Greek word translated by two words in English—namely, "Be baptized." Here, then, is an imperative verb in the second person, of uncertain significance, let us say, as to the action prescribed by it, but of perfectly certain significance as to the person or persons who are to perform the action. It is the persons addressed: from the nature of the case, from the universal laws of human language, it can be no other than they. Whatever "being baptized" may mean, the commandment, "Be baptized," can be obeyed only by the person to be baptized. If any one else undertakes to obey it, the result simply is that one *has* somebody baptized—an action which might be obedience if the command were, "*Have* such or such a person baptized," but which, the commandment being "Be baptized," is no obedience at all. The commandment, "Be baptized," *can* therefore be obeyed only by one capable of understanding, *first*, that something is *commanded; secondly*, that that something is commanded *him;* and *thirdly*, *what* that something commanded is. The commandment, "Be baptized," *will* be obeyed only by one who, besides being capable of so understanding,

is likewise disposed to obey the commandment. The person to be baptized (whatever baptism is) must be both intelligent and obedient. Obedience to the commandment is, on any other conditions, simply a thing impossible and inconceivable.

We arrive at this conclusion—namely, the conclusion that only the person spoken to in the words "Be baptized" can possibly do what therein is directed to be done, and that that person can obey in doing it only as he knows what is directed and has the purpose to comply,—this conclusion, I say, we arrive at, without resort to the context in which the commandment stands, solely from the necessary, the inevitable force, of the one Greek word and the two English words in which the commandment is couched. There is no evading of the conclusion by any art of interpretation whatever. The conclusion resides immovably and impregnably in the very form itself, irrespective of the meaning of the commandment. It is needless to say, though it may, of course, truly be said, that the context confirms the conclusion in almost every practicable way. Persons may unquestionably be baptized—that is, dipped, sprinkled, "poured" (the barbarism seems necessary) —in the bare literal sense of the word employed, either by their own motion or by the motion of others—that is, either voluntarily or involuntarily: this is quite possible; but no such baptism is baptism in the sense of the words constituting the commandment, "Be baptized," *unless* the subject consciously consents to it, *and* does so for the purpose in his heart of fulfilling the will of Christ. Conscious obedience alone converts the else

bald physical fact into that which we have learned to mean and to understand when we say or hear the word "baptism." A man might as well try to stare the sun out of countenance as to deny this, or to gainsay it, or to ignore it, with the New Testament before his eyes and with his senses in his head.

Last, briefly, *What* is baptism? As has already been said, no less complicated question ever was asked, no question less susceptible of being variously answered. Let us remember that we are seeking now for the nature of the outward act implied in baptism. The element of obedience in it may be left out of account. The nature of the outward act will be the same with or without obedience. What, then, is the physical action denoted by the Greek word "baptism" (for "baptism" is simply a Greek word made English)? Lexicographers, with one accord, reply, "Immersion." Some few of them, perhaps, but not the most enlightened, admit other meanings.

Pædobaptists treat baptism as if in the New Testament it meant "application of water to the person." If this were the meaning, immersion would still be valid indeed as baptism, but equally valid would be sprinkling or pouring. Manifestly, water may be applied in any one of these three ways. But what is the fact about the meaning of the Greek word "baptism"?

There is a view of plain common sense which it needs no Greek scholarship to appreciate. Every language naturally has a word to mean "dip," a word to mean "sprinkle," and a word to mean "pour," for the obvious reason that all these actions are common every-

where and need to be spoken of. Every language naturally, too, has a word to mean "moisten," "dampen," "wet." This latter word, in any language, would be vague enough to include within its scope every form of applying water that should result in *wetting* the object to which the water was applied. Now, if Christ meant, "Have water applied to your person," when he said, through Peter, "Be baptized," why did he not use this more vague, less determinate word? Or if he sometimes used the specific word which means "Be dipped" in a loose way for the general direction, "Have yourself wetted," how does it happen that he never in any instance used the specific word which would mean "Be sprinkled," in a similarly loose way for the same general direction? Is it probable that Christ, always meaning loosely "Be wetted," would always say, strictly, "Be dipped"? The emblematic import attributed in the New Testament to baptism of course still further fixes the real meaning of a word that was, however, in no need of having its meaning further fixed.

Let Baptists, then, not be misunderstood to be mere sticklers for a little more water in baptism or a particular mode of baptizing. What Baptists stand for is obedience to Christ in everything, and, with the rest, for obedience to Christ in being baptized.

I reserve to another chapter the unfolding of what I believe to be the vast, the almost incalculable, practical importance of the Baptist principle in its application to baptism as the importance of that principle thus applied is illustrated in nineteen centuries of church history.

CHAPTER XII.

A MODERN PSEUDO-APOSTOLIC EPISTLE.

UNDER the heading, "Paul to the Modern Galatians," a recent periodical article undertakes to dispose at a stroke of those whom it calls "ritualists in all denominations." "Somewhat thus"—so this article imagines—"would St. Paul to-day address himself to these who still bend themselves about Mount Sinai." And it then goes on to frame a lively and ingenious parody of "St. Paul's" ("Paul's," instead of "*St.* Paul's," better suits the non-ritualizing taste) Epistle to the Galatians, adjusting it to the supposed current phases of the Galatian tendency apparent among us of this country and age.

The parody of Paul's letter thus furnished, no doubt was furnished in perfect good faith on the part of the author. We readily assume that the author really conceived himself to have faithfully represented therein the true original Pauline ideas on the subject discussed, and we accordingly treat the implied argument with seriousness and candor in reply.

We may properly confine ourselves to two points only in the manifold indictment brought against various Christian bodies for ritualism on their part. Those two points concern the two Christian ordinances, bap-

tism and the Lord's Supper. The journalistic pseudo-Paul uses the following language:

"Why are ye again entangled in the yoke of bondage? Why are ye making the loving memorials of Christ's death, or the symbol of the cleansing of your sins, a test and a stumbling-block? It is not the slavery of water or wine or bread which Christ enjoins; but he offers the love and freedom of sons. I would they were not only dipped, but drowned, that trouble you."

In prefacing the pseudo-Pauline epistle the writer says:

Paul "had to repeat it in every form that Christianity was all spirit; that Christ had come to redeem us from slavery to the ordinances, which neither we nor our fathers could bear; and that not one—absolutely not one—of the merely outward and physical adjuncts of religion was now binding—not circumcision, not sacrifice, not holy days. Everything was done away, and all that was required was the spirit of love and obedience."

Now, as I have been accustomed to read Paul, he never once said, in any form, and, of course, therefore, he could not "repeat in every form," that "Christianity was all spirit." Paul was a great deal too well balanced in his mental constitution, a great deal too earnestly practical in his religious spirit, ever to say such a foolish and misleading thing as that. He insisted on the spirit, but he insisted, too, and not less, on the *manifestation* of the spirit. This is the explanation of Paul's innumerable preceptive exhortations

occurring in his letters applicable to every-day life. Paul was no legalist, but he was also no sentimentalist. The practical interest is always and everywhere supreme in his writings. His doctrine was all for the sake of life. Life is spirit, to be sure; but life is conduct as well, according to Paul, and according to the unanimous and emphatic consent of Scripture. A falser and more mischievous representation of Paul's teaching than to say of it that it made "Christianity all spirit" could hardly be contrived, unless it were to say of it that it made Christianity all outward behavior. Paul's teaching did neither the one nor the other of these things. It married spirit and letter in indivisible unity.

By happy unconscious self-despatch the writer recognizes the truth of these statements when he says, "All that was required was the spirit of love and *obedience*." Yes, that indeed is all: "the spirit of love" first, and then "obedience." This is Paul, and this is Christ, and this, in short, is Scripture. But if "obedience" means anything additional to "love," then Christianity is not "all spirit." Obedience is at least something to Christianity. Or does our writer mean the "spirit of love and [of] obedience"? Well, that, indeed, turns all into "spirit," and saves for the writer his consistency, but at the expense of his inconsistent fidelity to truth. For, as the spirit of love loves, so the spirit of obedience obeys. It is pure sentimentalism—or, worse, it is sentimentalism not pure, but mixed with Antinomianism—that rests satisfied with the spirit of love without loving, or with the spirit of

obedience without obeying. It is a tendency abhorrent from Paul. We seem to hear Paul utter at encounter of it his fervent, deprecatory "God forbid!"

It is true enough, as the pseudo-Paul says, that "it is not the slavery of water or wine or bread which Christ enjoins." But how is it that we escape the "slavery"? Is it by disregarding the command, "Baptize," or the commands, "Drink" and "Eat"? Is it not rather by regarding these commands—regarding them in the loyal spirit of love? Disregarding them is not freedom, it is only disobedience; and disobedience, sooner or later, is always bondage. So Adam found, to his cost, and to ours. The way to freedom is the way of obedience. If Christ had said, "Be Jews and observe Moses' ceremonial requirements," then the way to freedom would be through strict obedience to this command, and consequent observance of the Mosaic ritual. But Christ taught Paul, "Disuse the Mosaic ritual; practise it no longer." Obedience still is our freedom, and we obey by ceasing to ritualize according to Moses. We repeat, if Christ had said, "Go on ritualizing according to Moses," then our duty, and our liberty no less, would lie in ritualizing according to Moses. Christ did not say this, but the contrary. He did, however, say, "Baptize," "Be baptized," "Eat," and "Drink." A new ritualism, if you please to call it such. It is binding, however, for the very same reason that the old ritualism ceased to the Jews to be binding—namely, the authority of Christ.

Christ was the end of the law—the old law; good

reason, therefore, for the old law's ceasing to be in force after the "It is finished" of Calvary. Christ was the beginning and the source of this new law; good reason, therefore, for Christ's saying, "Do this" ("till he come" is Paul's own clause of perpetual obligation), "disciple, *baptize*, teach;" "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

I confess it has always seemed to me so absurd as to be absolutely incomprehensible that intelligent Christian men should continue to observe *a* ritual and pretend to slight *the* ritual. If baptism is nothing, why, pray, practise baptism? If the Lord's Supper is nothing, why, in the name of reason, continue to observe the Lord's Supper? The *essence* of a ritual act, its spirit, lies in its being the act prescribed. If the act is of no consequence, then the rite itself—for the rite consists in the act—is of no consequence. Why go on to perform a rite which you ceaselessly proclaim to be nothing? One can understand ritualism like that of Rome; one can understand anti-ritualism like that of the Quaker; one can understand obedience like that which, either well informed or misinformed, most evangelical Christians attempt to practise; but that nondescript something which is neither ritualism nor anti-ritualism; nor yet obedience, as it does *an* act, but disdains to do *the* act; which says by its words that *the* rite is of no account, while saying by its practice that *a* rite is indispensably important,—this unnamable somewhat, one is compelled, indeed, to recognize as undoubtedly existing, for it stares one in the face from many a printed page of Christian polemics; but this—

I make my confession with candor—this I cannot understand. It agrees well, however, with the inconsiderateness that could permit its subject to talk about "ordinances which neither we nor our fathers could bear;" as if, forsooth, either "we" or "our fathers" had ever had anything the least to do with "bearing" the ordinances of the Mosaic economy! It agrees well, too, with that released spirit of superiority to wellnigh universal Christian opinion which could permit its subject to talk about Paul's "repeating" that "not one—absolutely not one—of the merely outward and physical adjuncts of religion was now binding," in face of the fact that it is Paul himself who in more than one of his Epistles draws out, at the most impressive length and in the most suggestive detail, the symbolic meanings enfolded in baptism, thus by implication most emphatically attesting the continuing obligation of the ordinance,—that it is Paul himself who in a memorable passage of his letter to the Corinthians gives particular directions about the observance of the Lord's Supper.

"Everything was done away," indeed! A sweeping expression. "Was done away!" When? how? When Christ ordained baptism and ordained the Supper, was it then that the Supper and that baptism were "done away"? Were these things done away in and by virtue of their being enjoined? If not at this time, if not in this manner, then how, pray, and when? The Second Dispensation "did away" the First Dispensation in its ritual part by in that part fulfilling it: this is intelligible; but the Second Dispensation—the Dispensation to which

alone baptism and the Lord's Supper belong,—has a third dispensation succeeded to this, whereby this also "now" has in its turn been "done away"? Let the prophet of the third dispensation—if third dispensation there be and it have a prophet among us—speak out more plainly. If "everything" now, at least, has indeed been "done away," it concerns us all to know it.

The third dispensation, if the pseudo-Paul indicates truly its character, must be something very like, however unrecognizedly like, what Christians have learned to know, but not to admire, as "free religion."

CHAPTER XIII.

BAPTISM IN SYMBOLS.

THERE are several passages of Scripture in which baptism is presented to us under certain resemblances, figures, or symbols. These divinely-approved similitudes to represent baptism ought, carefully studied, to suggest useful collateral hints as to what baptism properly is, perhaps also as to who may properly receive baptism. If we know what a thing in question is like, we are at least so much nearer knowing what that thing in question itself is. Let us, accordingly, in the present chapter, give ourselves to a thoughtful examination of the symbols under which the Spirit of God has chosen to set forth baptism in his holy word.

One conspicuous scriptural passage in which baptism is expressly, and therefore unmistakably, referred to in the way of symbol or emblem occurs in the tenth chapter of the first letter to the Corinthians. The following are the words: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

I feel that a word needs to be premised of justifi-

cation for the seriousness with which I shall presently treat the strangely perverse interpretation that the advocates of sprinkling for baptism—the less enlightened, that is to say, among them—seek to put upon this passage of Scripture. I cite in illustration a comment from Arthur's *Tongue of Fire* (p. 30), curious for perfectly reckless assertion on the part of the author: "The only other case in which the mode of contact between the baptizing element and the baptized persons is indicated is this: 'And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.' They were not dipped in the cloud, but the cloud descended upon them; they were not plunged into the sea, but the sea sprinkled them as they passed." It is such popular comment as this, unaffected by scholarship either possessed or borrowed by the commentator, that still continues to blind the eyes of thousands upon thousands of conscientious non-Baptist Christians all over the world. Meantime, of course, really competent scholars of all denominations hold substantially the same doctrine concerning the passage now under consideration as that which is here about to be set forth.

In the present passage a special emphasis rests on the word *all*. Paul is enforcing the idea that no one should be over-confident of final salvation on the ground of any forms or rites observed or any privileges enjoyed. *All* the fathers, he says, shared the high experiences enumerated, but not all were brought safely through their wandering in the wilderness. For the practica purpose of rendering the historic example

more impressive, Paul uses language in a way to make the case of the ancient Israelites seem as closely parallel as possible with that of Christians. In accordance with this plan of discourse, having mentioned the abiding of the fathers under the cloud and their passing through the sea, he immediately seizes upon the thought of treating these experiences of theirs as constituting a kind of baptism. We examine now, let us keep in mind, this turn of Paul's rhetoric for the sake of finding out what is incidentally taught in it of a certain subordinate matter. Our question is simply this: What hint as to the true nature and form of baptism does Paul's implied comparison contain? The right way of reaching an answer will of course be by attentively considering what the comparison implied is.

I say "the comparison," but perhaps I should say "the comparisons" rather; for I am inclined to think that we have here, not one single compound comparison, in which "cloud" and "sea" are both together concerned, but two distinct comparisons instead; *first*, of baptism to the relation of the Israelites with the cloud, and *secondly*, of baptism to the relation of the Israelites with the sea—that is, I believe the quick and teeming mind of Paul saw in two different great experiences of the Israelites two different available symbols for baptism, and used them both. I draw this conclusion partly from a study of the language of the passage before us, and partly from a study of the Old-Testament history. Paul does not say, "All our fathers were under the cloud *while* they passed through

the sea," or, "All our fathers passed through the sea under the cloud;" he says, "All our fathers were under the cloud, *and* they *all* passed through the sea." The repetition of the word "all" would hardly have occurred if one and the same experience on the part of the Israelites had been intended. They all, Paul would say, had *this* experience, and they all had *that* experience. The experiences were two: *first*, that of being under the cloud; *secondly*, that of passing through the sea. With this understanding of the first verse agrees the phraseology of the second. For it is not said, "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and sea," as if sea and cloud united to give them one baptism; it is said, "And were all baptized unto Moses *in* the cloud and *in* the sea," the preposition *in* being repeated, as if to indicate two separate experiences on their part, each experience capable of being likened to baptism.

We scrutinize the history of the passing of the Red Sea, and we find our view confirmed. It is distinctly stated in Exodus that on the eve of the Israelites commencing their dread adventure of fording the Red Sea, the cloud "went from before their face, and stood behind them." There is not the smallest hint to show that *at this time* the cloud was over the Israelites. The cloud *had* been before them; it now removed and took its station behind them. Whether in making this change it passed over the host or fetched a circuit to one side of them, nothing is said that encourages us to form a conjecture. But, at all events, the cloud during the whole of the night in

which the passage was effected stood in the rear of the Israelites, bright in its aspect toward them, while dark in its aspect toward the Egyptians. There is, therefore, no natural way in which the cloud could *meanwhile* have supplied a means of baptism to the Israelites. Elsewhere in the Old-Testament history it is stated that the cloud stood *over* the Israelites and was *upon* them; the time when is not given. When, however, fixed in that local relation to the host, the cloud might in at least one conceivable way have "baptized" them. Standing behind them, it could not have done so in any way that seems natural.

We conclude, therefore, with much confidence, that Paul introduces in the verses here being considered not one symbol of baptism made up of two parts, but two different symbols instead. There was a symbolic baptism in the cloud, and there was besides a symbolic baptism in the sea. Now the point is, How were these baptisms in symbol effected? Or rather, Exactly what were the occurrences or experiences that Paul here uses rhetorically as analogues of baptism? Take first the symbol in which the cloud is concerned.

Two mutually contradictory answers have been proposed. One is that the cloud sprinkled water upon the Israelites. To this answer there are various objections. *First*, there is no evidence that the cloud was an aqueous cloud. It was dark by day and it was light at night, having in this latter case the appearance of fire. It is purely and wholly gratuitous to assume that the cloud was vapor of water. More, it is against

probability. *Secondly*, let it have been granted that the cloud was compact of water, still it is sheer assumption—assumption again contrary to likelihood—that the cloud shed down showers upon the Israelites. Are we to suppose that the cloud kept the Israelites constantly sprinkled? That it did so upon occasion? When? Why? *Thirdly*, the preposition is against this view. "*In* the cloud" is the phrase. Insert "sprinkled" for "baptized," and see how the clause looks: "Were sprinkled in the cloud." Does this seem natural? Even if the cloud had indeed shed water upon the Israelites from its position *over* them, still surely that fact would not have been stated in the phrase, "were sprinkled in the cloud." *Fourthly*, the word "baptized" is against this view. "Baptized" means covered with or in or under; as, for example, with or in or under water. That, however, we must not now say. That is here a begging of the question. We do not yet know what "baptized" means; we are seeking to know. And we must not use the lexicon for the purpose; we must keep to the symbol here employed to represent baptism.

The three objections above named put sprinkling out of the question. It is not certain that the cloud sprinkled water; it is not likely that the cloud sprinkled water. It is not certain that the cloud contained water; it is not likely that the cloud contained water. But if, in spite of no evidence for it and in spite of likelihood against it, the cloud did yet both contain water and sprinkle water, still that fact would not naturally be alluded to in the expression, "were

baptized *in* the cloud." Nay, if sprinkling is baptism, and if the sprinkling supposed took place, then that sprinkling would not have been used as Paul here uses what did take place—namely, in the way of a *symbol* for baptism. A symbol is founded in, not identity, but resemblance. If a sprinkling with water *is* baptism, then a sprinkling with water is not a symbol of baptism. The whole purport of the passage is nullified if you try to make out a sprinkling with water to resemble a sprinkling with water. The Lord's Supper in the context is symbolized by the manna for the bread and by the miraculous water for wine. Here is resemblance, but not identity. Just so, baptism is symbolized by something that is like baptism, but that is not baptism. By what, then? Why, nothing more simple. By the hovering of the cloud over the Israelites, as the water for a moment covers the subject in baptism. But some one says, "Stay: the cloud, you hold, was not vapor of water. No water, and yet baptism?" Certainly; baptism in symbol, not baptism in fact. "The cloud simply over the Israelites, they not enveloped in it? No immersion, and yet baptism?" Certainly; the symbol may not be perfect: symbols seldom are. Still, we do not know but the cloud, as the rabbis think it did, may have wrapped the Israelites quite around in its folds. This, however, it is not at all necessary to suppose. The cloud covering the Israelites, according to the expression of the psalm, "He spread a cloud for a covering,"—this representation is quite sufficient for the purpose of the symbol. The feature

of burial in baptism—one of the most important features of the rite as itself a symbol—is strikingly set forth. This amply suffices the purposes.

The symbol for baptism contained in the relation of the Israelites to the cloud appears thus to exclude sprinkling as the rite intended to be alluded to. Immersion, on the contrary, for baptism entirely satisfies the conditions of the case. So much for baptism, then, as it is presented in the symbol of the cloud. A very brief notice will enable us to dismiss the symbol contained in the passing of the Red Sea.

In order to make this symbol seem consistent with a mistaken view of what baptism is, it has been assumed by some (Arthur in his *Tongue of Fire* affords an example) that the divided sea scattered spray on the Israelites as they passed through between the walls of water on either side. This assumption is purely gratuitous; there is not the slightest evidence in its favor; there is every probability against it. Is it to be supposed that God would so imperfectly work his attempted miracle? Is it like the Wonderful in working that he should indeed separate the body of the sea to make dry land in its bed, and yet wet the Israelites as they passed with spray from the waves? Of course, if it were related that such was the case, there would be nothing for us but to believe it, and to believe it to have been wise and good; but, it not being related, will anybody pretend that it is probable?

On the other hand, how like an immersion it was—like, observe, without being the same—for the Israelites to venture themselves down to the bottom of the sea

and enclose themselves within those dread walls of water heaped up on either side! Conceive the event as a spectacle. The observer beholds the great procession of the Israelites descending between those beetling watery walls into a lane stretched out long and narrow across the whole breadth of the sea at the point where the passage was made. The host are lost as it were in "the midst of the sea." After an interval they issue from their entombment in a resurrection upon the farther shore. How vividly like the majestic enactment on a colossal scale of a baptism, with its submersion, its instant of disappearance from view, its subsequent emersion, on the part of the subject! How worthily impressive an image of the beautiful ordinance by which the obedient disciple signifies his death to sin and his resurrection to righteousness is thus seen to be that great critical act of the Israelites, in which they gave themselves irrevocably up to the leadership of Moses, passing from the bondage of Egypt through a tomb in the sea to emerge beyond this entombment into their new life of national freedom and power! Is it less than irreverence — unconscious irreverence, it may be, toward the word of God—to treat this passage as the upholders of sprinkling for baptism are forced to do? Think of Paul's bringing forward an inexpressibly august and awful event of Jewish history, the crossing of the Red Sea, to make, pray, what use of it? Why, forsooth, to separate from it an incident —namely, the sprinkling of the Israelites with spray; an incident that, if it ever occurred at all—which is in the highest degree improbable—was certainly deemed

by the sacred historical writers too trivial to deserve even a mention at their hands,—to separate, I say, an incident so insignificant from so tremendously significant an event, making it the type of a Christian ordinance which the whole scope of the context shows Paul meant to magnify to the utmost possible impressiveness! Is this not an anti-climax—nay, a plunge into bathos—impossible to the rhetoric of Paul?

It ought perhaps to be noted that the "were baptized" of our common English version should, according to the best authorities, read "baptized themselves" or "caused themselves to be baptized," the sense thus being that the baptism was an act performed by the Israelites of their own accord. The bearing of this on the question, What persons may justly receive baptism? is too obvious to need pointing out.

Before the final dismissal of the present passage from consideration it may be well to remark that the finding in it of two symbols for baptism instead of one is not in the least material to the conclusion drawn as to its teaching on the form of the rite. If you please still to regard the symbolic baptism as a single one, jointly made up from the cloud and the sea, the result is the same. The baptism in that case consists in the enclosing of the Israelites in the sea while they are canopied over with the cloud. In any case, the nature of the symbol employed requires that the thing symbolized—namely, baptism—should be immersion.

The other chief passage of Scripture in which baptism is presented in symbol occurs in the third chapter of the First Epistle of Peter. This passage is confess-

edly difficult and obscure. The teaching of it on the present subject may, however, be made sufficiently explicit. The passage reads as follows in our English Bible: "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The best critical scholarship, independently quite of theologic or ecclesiastical bias, decides that we must translate differently from the common version. The change required is one that does not bear either this way or that on the baptismal teachings of the text. It simply brings out the general meaning more clearly. Let us translate as follows: "Which [that is to say, *water*] in antitype, baptism, is also now saving you (not the flesh's putting off of filth, but a good conscience' appeal to God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." * The meaning in paraphrase is this: As Noah, with his few, was saved in the ark by water, so you may regard yourselves as saved by water. The water by which you are saved is the water of baptism, of which baptismal water the water that saved Noah with his household may serve to your minds as type. Noah was borne in the ark by water (or *through* water) from the old world that perished to the new world that emerged. So you pass by the water of baptism from the death

* The New Revision, issued since this was written, thus translates: "Which also after a true likeness [margin, *in the antitype*] doth now save you, *even* baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation [margin, *inquiry*, or *appeal*] of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Christ." This fully justifies the author's translation.—EDITOR.

of sin to the life of righteousness. Water is in both cases the medium or element of transition. But beware of mistake. Baptism, the outward act, has no power to save. Baptism does not consist in a cleansing of the physical person; its significance is not in putting away outward defilement. Indeed, it is not the flesh's act at all; it is the act of the soul; it is the regenerate "good" heart making its appeal of obedience to God. For, after all, it is only as baptism furnishes a symbol of resurrection that it can be said to save. You enact a resurrection in your baptism. The resurrection which you thus enact in baptism is doubly emblematic. It emblematizes your own resurrection from spiritual death to spiritual life; but it emblematizes, too, that resurrection of Jesus Christ by which alone you experience your mighty change. It is the resurrection of Jesus Christ that saves.

Thus natural and thus striking becomes the present allusion to baptism on the supposition that baptism is immersion. Suppose, on the contrary, that sprinkling is baptism, and note the change that the passage suffers in felicity and force. The water that saved Noah should, according to this latter supposition, be, not the water that buoyed and bore his ark over from the world before to the world after the flood, but the water of the falling rain, since only that feature of the great event could suggest the idea of a "sprinkling." But water conceived of as falling in the form of rain had nothing whatever to do with "saving" Noah. It was not the continued rain which went before the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep—it was the flood of

water which the rain merely helped to make—that floated the ark with its living freight across, as it were, from world to world. Nothing was farther from Peter's thought as he approached this verse than the rain that preceded the deluge. His mind was full of the image of the flood with the ark buoyant on it bearing Noah and his family over (remember, he had just spoken of Christ's dying and being made again alive) from death to life. It would have been an impossible diversion for his mind to pass suddenly from this sublime conception to the comparatively trivial incident of the rainfall that preceded the flood. Yet such a diversion Peter must have made, in order to have baptism suggested to him at this moment—that is to say, it being supposed that baptism is sprinkling. Again, how entirely needless was the warning against mistaking baptism for a physical cleansing if baptism is sprinkling! Nobody, surely, ever was in any danger of mistakenly imagining that sprinkling could make clean — except, indeed, ceremonially clean, which is entirely out of the thought and out of the language of the writer in this place. There is, on the other hand, a presumed cleansing of personal defilement naturally associated in thought with immersion of the body. This bodily cleansing, however, is nothing save as it signifies, not ceremonial cleansing, assuredly—for such a notion, I repeat, is not once present to the writer's mind, to be either approved or rejected—but cleansing of the heart. Even this spiritual cleansing, however, is not here the chief thought in Peter's mind. Not spiritual cleansing in place of physical cleansing, but simply a good con-

science confidently appealing to God in an act of obedience like that of Christ at his baptism when he would "fulfil all righteousness,"—this is the purport of the parenthesis. Then follows the clause, "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Christ had just before the allusion to Noah and the flood, and in the way of suggesting that, been spoken of as put to death and made alive. The idea of Christ's resurrection is therefore naturally resumed, or rather expressly mentioned again, it having been impliedly present all through the allusion to the flood. But how could the resurrection of Jesus Christ be brought into association with baptism, if the baptism were sprinkling? What possible relation of resemblance can be conceived to be between a sprinkling and resurrection? On the other hand, between a resurrection and the emersion that of necessity succeeds and completes the act of momentary immersion the resemblance is too striking to escape any observer's attention.

Thus much for the teaching of this allusion to baptism in so far as respects the form and nature of the rite. But the allusion speaks of baptism as a good conscience' appeal to God, or perhaps rather as the appeal to God for a good conscience. Neither the one nor the other of these two things, and no "appeal" of any sort on the subjects' part, could baptism be if unconscious infants were baptized; which consideration decisively settles it that baptism as proper for unconscious infants was an idea quite absent from the mind of the writer. Carefully and candidly study it, and how unexpectedly, how surprisingly, self-vindicating proves

to be the inspired word of God! In so many different ways does the truth, once fairly apprehended, preclude and exclude error. The scriptural symbols *for* baptism, scarcely less than the scriptural symbols *in* baptism, testify that baptism is, and can be, nothing but immersion. "Symbols in baptism" will form the title of a succeeding chapter complementary to the present discussion. Under that title another text of Scripture will be treated, whose twofold character is such that it might with equal propriety be treated here; for the text to which I refer gives us at once baptism in a symbol and a symbol in baptism. This text occurs in the third chapter of John's Gospel. The essential words in it are these: "Born of water." In these words baptism is mentioned under the figure of a birth—a birth from, or out of, water. Such a figure for baptism contains an irresistible implication. Nothing but immersion satisfies the conditions of the case. In immersion those conditions are completely satisfied. The person of one baptized issues from the water in the act of immersion, like the breaking forth of a child at its birth. The baptized is justly and vividly described as "born of water." The figure fits exactly, but it fits exactly to the rite of immersion, and to no other.

The argument created by all these various coincidences of figure would alone suffice, if every other argument were wanting, to establish beyond reasonable doubt the truth that baptism is immersion, and that nothing except immersion is baptism.

CHAPTER XIV.

SYMBOLS IN BAPTISM.

IT may be remarked at the outset that the purpose with which this study is undertaken does not require us to regard the truly remarkable resemblances set forth by the New-Testament writers as discoverable in baptism in the light of symbols originally and designedly lodged in the rite by him who ordained it. Such I, for my part, do indeed believe these resemblances to have been. Still, for the object of our present quest it will answer equally well to treat the passages considered as mere rhetorical turns suggested by essential features of the rite which were perfectly familiar to those for whom the New Testament was primarily written, and which therefore were, of course, never questioned by them. Whether the analogies drawn out in Scripture between baptism and certain Christian facts and doctrines were foreordained by God to exist, in order to constitute that rite a kind of unchangeable object-lesson in religion, or whether these analogies were discovered as an afterthought by the wit of man under divine inspiration,—this, with respect to our immediate strictly limited purpose, is entirely immaterial. In either case equally the analogies, whether designed or fortuitous, on two points at

least speak an unambiguous language. Those two points are these: *First*, What, according to Scripture, is baptism? and *secondly*, Who, according to Scripture, may be baptized?

Let us begin with the most extended and most important of the passages in which symbolic meanings are drawn forth out of baptism. This passage is found in the sixth chapter of Romans:

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

The first of these verses implies very plainly that all those with whom Paul identifies himself by saying "we," that is, all Christians—not simply all Roman Christians, for Paul was in no way identified with these more than with Christians generally—as being Christians, had been or were supposed to have been, as a matter of course, baptized, and that the baptism thus universally experienced had a particular significance, the same in all the cases alike, connected with Christ's death. What this significance, is the context sufficiently shows. Paul had just said with characteristic energy of expression that Christians could not be habitual sinners, for the reason that as to sin they had died. The act of dying, not the state of being dead, is the true idea. Or do you not know, he asks, the meaning of your baptism? When you were baptized in sign of entering into discipleship to Christ, you

were baptized in sign of having died as Christ died. Such is the very symbolism of the rite. This is why you were buried in being baptized. Dead men only are buried; your burial in baptism meant, therefore, that you had previously died. Of course, the death thus spoken of by Paul as experienced by the Christian is a figurative death. It means the absolute breaking of all relation with sin, a rupture final and complete, like that rupture which death produces. This, let it be observed, is said to be the significance of baptism. Whatever, therefore, the nature and form of the rite (that question may rest for the moment), the significance of the rite is that the subject of it has already died—not, be it noted, that he will die subsequently, not that he dies in the very act and article of the baptism, but that he has already died. This is said to be the case with *all* that have been baptized into Christ: they all died to sin before being baptized. In baptism they were "buried"—as persons already dead—that is, as persons who had distinctly dissolved all relation with sin. Is this the fact with unconscious infants? Can it be? Is it, can it be, the fact with any except truly regenerate souls?

The view may be taken that the act of dying to sin is meant to be represented by Paul as accomplished in the act of being baptized. "Being buried" is, then, only another way of setting forth the "dying." But of course, if "being baptized" is equivalent to "dying" and "being buried," the physical fact to the spiritual fact, it must be so, not literally, but in the way of figure—that is to say, the subject of the baptism enacts a

physical symbol of a spiritual experience. He says in language of sign to the eye, "As thus I go, like one dying, into a grave of water, so I die to sin." We may repeat our questions, Is this the fact with unconscious infants? Can it be? Is it, can it be, the fact with any except truly regenerate souls?

So much for the implication of this passage as to the proper subjects for baptism. Has the passage any implication as to the nature and form of the rite? Let us inquire.

Suppose the form of the rite had been sprinkling. Will anybody say that Paul's language would, on this supposition, have been naturally suggested? The spiritual facts to be signified would still have been the same. But would the present figure of rhetoric, under which Paul exhibits the facts, have been equally appropriate and natural? Let us try a substitution and see. We replace "baptize" and "baptism" by "sprinkle" and "sprinkling," and read the passage thus, and not otherwise changed. We have, "Know ye not that so many of us as were sprinkled into Jesus Christ were sprinkled into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by the sprinkling into his death." Now, of course a just allowance is to be made for the discomposing effect of any important verbal change in so familiar a passage of Scripture. But, making such allowance, still do we not feel that there is some incurable want of congruity between the idea of sprinkling and the idea of burial as symbolized thereby? Make the alternative substitution of "immersion" instead of "sprinkling," and you have the same allow-

ance as before to make for a verbal change in a familiar passage; but is not the resultant final effect far less strange, far less, so to speak, grotesque and ridiculous? Here is the new rendering in the words of a reputable printed version: "How shall we, who died to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that all we who were immersed into Jesus Christ were immersed into his death? We were buried therefore with him by the immersion into his death." Now—answer fairly—is not this more in keeping with itself than was the alternate form with "sprinkling" substituted for "baptism"? Is there any consonance between "sprinkling" and a burial? and is not the consonance striking between a burial and "immersion"? Supposing it were your task to devise a rite that should be symbolic at once of burial and of resurrection, what livelier resemblance could you wish than that contained in immersion? What resemblance could be more purely conventional and awkward than that which sprinkling would supply? And since baptism is unquestionably here used in such connection with the idea of burial and resurrection as to suggest a resemblance between it and them—in such connection, moreover, as to make it almost certain that it was the perceived resemblance which dictated the form of expression for the writer's thought,—since this is the case, can there be any reasonable doubt that baptism *is* immersion, and nothing else?

To be connected with the passage in Romans just considered is a parallel passage in the second chapter of Colossians:

"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

Burial and resurrection, the implications here, are symbolized in baptism. Surely this could not be the case if baptism were sprinkling. The likeness is most obvious and beautiful in the rite of immersion. Remember, I am not now insisting that immersion was chosen, for the sake of the symbolism in it of burial and resurrection, to be the great rite of the Christian religion that it is. It suffices for my present purpose to point out merely that this symbolism found in it, whether put there of original intention or not, determines the rite of baptism to be immersion, and nothing else. Still, I am willing to commit myself, and say that the tone of the allusions in Paul to baptism as figurative of burial and resurrection are just what the tone of such allusions would naturally be if it were a part of the apostle's customary inculcation thus to unfold the meaning of the ordinance. The allusions have less the air of incidental literary illustration than of regular and recognized Christian instruction. We get a truer and livelier sense of the foregoing passage if therein, as well as in the first verse of the third chapter, where the interrupted representation is resumed, we translate "were raised" instead of "are risen." This change, required by the Greek, makes more clear and unmistakable the reference intended by the apostle to the particular point of time when the baptism occurred. It is as if we should read: "If then ye were, on occasion of your baptism, raised together with Christ."

The symbol of resurrection—resurrection as a literal fact in the history of Jesus, resurrection as a spiritual fact in the experience of the Christian—this twofold symbol of resurrection found in baptism as treated by Scripture can be satisfied only on the supposition that baptism is immersion; while, on that supposition, it is completely and easily satisfied. The inference is irresistible that immersion, and nothing but immersion, is baptism.

We take up now a group of passages in which a different symbol from that of resurrection—namely, the symbol of birth, a second birth—seems to be brought to light in Scripture as discoverable in baptism. "Seems," I say; for here, I confess, we enter upon ground where I tread with less confident steps. The Scriptures to be treated in this immediate part of our discussion are obscure and difficult, and I shall not dogmatize. I content myself with indicating what, after considerable study, appears to me to be upon the whole the most satisfactory among the various possible interpretations.

The first of the passages that may fairly be understood to suggest a symbolism for regeneration as contained in baptism occurs in the third chapter of John's Gospel. Our Saviour is there reported as saying to Nicodemus:

"Except a man be born of water and [of the] Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

The words "of the" embraced in brackets have no equivalent in the Greek, and may therefore be omitted. The omission of these words leaves us free, if it does

not even oblige us, to understand that one birth only, doubly characterized as birth of water and Spirit, is spoken of here; not two births, one of water and one of Spirit. Whatever, therefore, birth of water may mean, it means that in inseparable unity with birth of the Spirit. But what does birth of water mean? Let us consider. The most striking thing in the then current history of the Jewish nation, next to the ministry of Jesus, and at the actual moment perhaps hardly second to that, was the baptism of John. When Jesus first responded to Nicodemus his expression was, "Ye must be born again." This was designed, no doubt, to be a stimulating paradox. Nicodemus received it as such, and set his wits to work to divine its meaning. Very likely his thoughts went to John's baptism. "Does Jesus mean that?" he asked himself. Not satisfied, he seeks the Lord's own explanation. The Lord perceived the guess that Nicodemus had made, and answered accordingly: "Baptism, yes; but more than baptism—baptism *and* what baptism implies. I said you must be born again, and you are conjecturing that I may mean baptism; and so indeed I do, but only in its symbolic relation to something else. Except a man be born of water *and* Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." At any rate, it is perfectly evident that birth of Spirit is the idea that receives all the emphasis in the Saviour's thought; that idea he dwells upon and illustrates. The idea of birth from water he mentions merely to dismiss; he uses it as a stepping-stone of transition, and returns to his first real thought—namely, the need of a new birth.

This use he makes of it only because the idea of baptism was already in the mind of Nicodemus; which fact, and not any priority of baptism to regeneration, caused baptism to be spoken of first.

All this, of course, assumes that "born of water" alludes to baptism. That it does is the nearly unanimous opinion of commentators. It is clear from the context, as well as from the general tenor of Scripture, that baptism, thus alluded to in the phrase "born of water," bears in Christ's thought some quite subordinate relation to regeneration. The most natural relation to suppose is the relation of symbol. Baptism represents regeneration by resemblance of some sort. What is the resemblance? The very phrase "born of water," to imply baptism, answers the question. If baptism can properly be spoken of as a birth from water, the reason why is obvious. Baptism *is* a sort of birth from water; the subject in baptism issues from the water as the child at birth issues from the womb. Hence, to "be born of water" is a not unnatural figure of speech for to "be baptized." It is, however, a figure of speech not likely to have been employed on this occasion by Christ, as also was baptism itself not likely to have been mentioned at all, except for the idea which I have ventured to suppose was awakened in the mind of Nicodemus by his attempt to solve the paradox, "Ye must be born again." I freely acknowledge that what I propose is not demonstrative, but only probable, exegesis. I do not build any vital argument upon it. That "born of water" should, as is generally held, refer to baptism, supplies

an argument for immersion as baptism that does not in the least require to be supplemented by our considering that baptism further is symbolic of regeneration.

On the supposition that the wellnigh universally received interpretation is right, we have a mention here made by our Saviour of baptism in terms of symbol—that is, mention of it as a birth of, or out of, water. To what notion of baptism does such language fit and conform but to the notion of baptism as immersion? What likeness is there between birth and, for instance, a sprinkling? But between birth and the emersion following and completing an immersion the likeness is obvious and striking. That baptism should be referred to as a birth of, or out of, or from, water fixes the nature of baptism beyond reasonable question. But if our present interpretation of the whole passage be sound, we have here something more than the mere mentioning of baptism in such terms of symbol as settle the form of the rite. We have also such a connection of birth from water with birth from the Spirit as makes baptism, symbolized by birth, itself symbolic of birth. This text, therefore, does two mutually complementary things: it first presents baptism in a symbol, the symbol of natural birth, and then it presents also a symbol in baptism, the symbol of spiritual birth. In whichever way you choose to regard it, baptism as thus presented, symbolized or symbolizing, refuses still to be anything but immersion.

There is, however, another text in which the same symbolism, that of spiritual new birth, appears to be

drawn out from the rite of baptism. This other text occurs in the third chapter of Titus: "He saved us by the washing of regeneration." "The washing of regeneration" is a mistranslation. It should read, "the *laver*, or *font*, of regeneration." The word mistranslated "washing" means, not the act or fact of bathing, but a vessel designed to hold water for a full bath. Paul here, then, alludes to baptism as a bath: a "bath of regeneration" he calls it—that is, not a bath producing regeneration, but a bath accompanying regeneration and signifying that. What is regeneration? Simply second birth, being born again. How is regeneration connected in thought with a bath, so as to give rise to the expression "bath of regeneration"? Why, the bath symbolizes the regeneration. How? By being a bath, or an immersion, out of which the subject issues, like a child from the womb, symbolically regenerated, figuratively born into a new life. The symbolism of regeneration thus found, if legitimately found, in baptism, makes it necessary that the baptism in which it is found should be immersion. Sprinkling would by no means furnish such a symbolism.

We have in the third chapter of Galatians this language: "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." More exactly, "As many of you as were baptized into Christ put on Christ"—the two things, namely, the being baptized and the putting on of Christ, being considered as coincident in time. The word used for "putting on" is the word ordinarily and distinctively em-

ployed to denote the putting on of raiment. Such is, no doubt, the figure intended to be here introduced. The Christian, then, was represented by Paul as clothing himself with Christ. This is one of the ways in which the great idea of the Christian's union and indentification with Christ is set forth. The person of a man is wrapped around by, is contained in, the garments that he wears—he is in them. So the believer is "*in* Christ;" he has put on Christ, and Christ now clothes him. The figure of being clothed with Christ thus presents the idea of being in Christ. But now why is baptism spoken of in connection? There was a reason for it. What is the reason? The relation affirmed or implied is that in the act of being baptized the act of putting on Christ was performed. Now, of course, no one that we need now to consider supposes that this was literally the case—in other words, that literally being baptized unites the subject with Christ. In what sense, then, was it the case? How was baptism the act of putting on Christ? Why, figuratively, representatively, symbolically. The act of being baptized represented the act of putting on Christ. The rite had that significance; its symbolism was such. Baptism, then, contains a symbol of union with Christ. How? If sprinkling be baptism, no answer is possible. It is easy to answer if baptism be immersion. Nothing could more strikingly typify the spiritual fact of the believer's entering into Christ so as thenceforth to be, according to Paul's favorite phrase, occurring in the immediate context, "*in* Christ,"—nothing, I say, could more strikingly typify this spiritual fact than the phys-

ical fact of immersion in water. For a moment the water envelops the person of the subject like a flowing garment. The subject has put that robe of water on; he is in it. His ritual act speaks this language: "Thus I put on Christ. He clothes me thus. I am in him now, as I am in this water." Now, certainly the Galatian Christians had all, in being baptized, performed some act that Paul could use as a figure for putting on Christ. What was the act? Was it being sprinkled? Was it *not* being immersed? And does not the use by Paul of baptism as a symbol for the believer's putting on of Christ, in the sense of his becoming one with, of his entering into, Christ, imply immersion, to the exclusion of sprinkling, for baptism?

The symbolic reference in baptism to the idea of the believer's mystical union with Christ is probably the true explanation of the expression "baptized into Christ" wherever in Scripture this expression occurs. The Great Commission says, "Baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Our English Bible renders "*in* the name of," but this is manifestly an inadequate, and even a misleading, translation. Elsewhere we have "baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." In still other places the word "name" is omitted, and the expression is shortened to "baptized into Christ." The preposition is in all these cases the same, "into." The word "name" is, in such a use, a Hebraism for the personality of the being named. We get the real force of the expression when we omit the word "name" altogether, and read, for example in the Great Commission, "Baptizing

them into the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost."

The sense is, "Signifying by baptism the entrance of the subject into a mystical union of life with God in his three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit." The word "name" is, in fact, as I have said, sometimes omitted in Scripture language, and the expression reduced to "baptized into Christ." We have just been examining an instance in which this shortened expression occurs in very significant connection with an unmistakable reference to the great idea of union and identification with Christ—namely, the text, "As many of you as were baptized into Christ put on Christ." This interprets being "baptized into Christ" to mean "entering into Christ," "becoming one with him." In one word, baptism *symbolizes* the spiritual union of the believer with Christ. Are we not warranted, then, in reverting from this implied interpretation to the use of language in the Great Commission, and understanding that solemn command to make baptism, not simply an arbitrary ritual act without special significance of its own, but a symbol of the disciple's union with God, of his passing *into*, and so remaining *in*, God—of his partaking of the divine nature? How shocking that we should confuse the symbol of a fact so sublime, and maim it to speak in a dialect of Babel, by substituting for baptism something entirely different, something breathing not a hint of a mystery that is at once too high and too hard not to need every possible expedient for keeping it signified and vivid to our minds and our hearts—the mystery of the union of the human with the divine!

But union of Christ's disciples, taken individually with Christ, is not the only union of which baptism is the symbol. In the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians we find the expression, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." "Ye," Paul soon afterward says, speaking as to Christians taken collectively—"ye are the body of Christ." It follows, then, that this pregnant and manifold symbol, Christian baptism, signifies as well the mutual union of believers with each other as their common union with their Lord. That such a meaning was taught by Paul to lie enfolded in baptism helps to explain a famous passage in Ephesians. I refer to the passage in which occur the words, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." The main idea of this passage was to assemble all the watchwords of mutual unity among themselves likely to make the Ephesian Christians dwell at peace with one another. Now, the fact of baptism being taught by Paul to *symbolize* the believer's incorporation into one body with his brethren makes it clear why baptism, being thus significant to apostolic converts, should be invoked here as a rallying-cry for union and peace. Conceive the effect of such a reminder to disciples instructed to know that when they yielded themselves to baptism, their entrance into the watery flood *meant* that thus they entered into one universal brotherhood of redeemed souls making up together the mystical body of Christ! How utterly without any such force of eloquent symbol and reminder would be an arbitrary rite of sprinkling! The suggestion springing from *resemblance* would be wanting. It is thus seen that in order to *symbolize* union

of Christians among themselves, as baptism certainly is used by Paul to do, it is necessary that baptism should be an immersion of the whole person of the subject in water, a kind of incorporation of the man with the element.

In addition to the symbolic meanings already unfolded, there is likewise presented in Scripture the symbol of spiritual purification as belonging to baptism. There are several texts that make this symbolism of the rite sufficiently clear. In the Acts it is related by Paul that Ananias addressed him in these words: "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Here baptism is indisputably made to symbolize a spiritual cleansing on the part of the subject. In the fifth chapter of Ephesians we have this: "Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Paul here speaks of the church as bride to Christ; his aim in doing so is to bring forward the highest conceivable sanction for the injunction he is laying upon husbands to love their wives. It is natural, therefore, for him to go on in a kind of parallel drawn between the husband's relation to his wife and Christ's relation to his church. As the bridegroom in espousing the bride gives presents and dowry, so Christ does: he gives himself for his church. As the Oriental bride before her nuptials takes a special bath in preparation, so Christ arranged it that the church, his spouse, should be cleansed for union with himself with a laver, or bathing-font, in which the word of truth should work the purifying effect. The term "water," "of water,"

seems to be introduced to point more clearly the allusion to baptism. Baptism is thus constituted a correspondence to the ante-nuptial bath taken by the Eastern bride. The "word," the *spoken* word (such is the sense of the Greek original)—that is, the gospel preached—is really the purifying element, in accordance with what Christ prays: "Sanctify them through [in] thy truth; thy word is truth." The water of baptism (baptism considered as a symbol of spiritual cleansing) is the copula that joins the two ideas—namely, that of the bride's formal purification and that of the sanctification of the church—in the relation of apparent resemblance which was needful to be established, in order to serve the purposes of Paul's rhetoric at this point. The full bath of the bride preceding her nuptials, and the baptism of the church, individual by individual, in the purifying element of the spoken word, on the entrance of each into mystical marriage with the Lord,—such seems to be the comparison intended by Paul. The express mention of "water," however, makes it evident that the literal baptism, or immersion, of the convert in water as invariably the condition of discipleship was what suggested the parallel to Paul's mind. Manifestly, the parallel could have been suggested only on the supposition that the convert's baptism was a bath or immersion, like the full bath of the bride.

Clearest, however, and for our immediate object fullest, of all allusions in Scripture to the symbol of purification in baptism is perhaps the passage in Hebrews: "Let us draw near with a true heart in the full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil

conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." A better punctuation connects the last clause with what follows instead of with what precedes, thus: "Let us draw near, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; and, having our bodies washed with pure water, let us hold fast the profession of our faith." This change of connection is in no way material to the use now about to be made of the passage. It is a point of interest, and I merely mention it in passing. The imagery and rhetoric of all this strain of exhortation are derived from the ceremonial of the Old Dispensation—a ceremonial elaborately prefigurative of the realities of the New. Two conditions affecting the believer are here named: one is, that the heart have been sprinkled from an evil conscience; the other, that the body have been washed with pure water. Both conditions are stated in a form suggested by the ritual of the Mosaic economy. There was a sprinkling and there was a washing of the body required by the Levitical law. The sprinkling was with blood mingled and prepared in a certain manner rigorously prescribed. The washing of the body was with clean water in the way of full immersion. The washing followed the sprinkling. The explanation is carefully, painstakingly, repetitiously made in the Epistle to the Hebrews that the sprinkling referred to as a feature of the present dispensation is a sprinkling with the blood of Jesus. It is, I believe, demonstrable—has, I believe, been demonstrated—that sprinkling as a usage of the Bible, whether of the Old Testament or the New, is *never* a sprinkling with water, mere and pure

water. But, however this may be, the sprinkling *here* referred to is a sprinkling with the blood of Jesus. In a previous chapter the writer of the Epistle has said: "For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" In a chapter following, this language occurs: "And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel." The sprinkling meant in the text on which we are dwelling is, accordingly, a sprinkling with blood, the blood of Jesus. It is, of course, then, not a literal, but a figurative, sprinkling. Christ's blood is not literally sprinkled; it could not be literally sprinkled on living human "hearts." Christ's blood, as a figure of Christ's offering of himself unto death on our behalf, does, however, produce a cleansing effect on souls that believe, answering to the effect produced by the typical blood of sacrificial victims sprinkled to make the objects, persons, or things affected by it ceremonially clean. The work of cleansing signified here is an inward work; it is justification, forgiveness. But the believer, besides being thus figuratively "sprinkled," as to his heart, with the blood of Jesus, is also "washed," as to his body, with pure water. The words "body" and "water" determine the washing to be a literal one: it is baptism. The full sense, accordingly, in paraphrase is this: "Let us draw near to

God, having been made fit to do so by the gracious justifying act of our Heavenly Father for Christ's sake forgiving and abolishing our sins. And, having fulfilled all righteousness by submitting our bodies to be washed with pure water—that is, by being baptized—let us keep faithful to the profession that we have thus solemnly made."

Here, then, in a crucial passage of Scripture—a passage that might almost seem to have been providently introduced by the Spirit of God on purpose to forestall and preclude the very mistake that, notwithstanding, so many Christian people do strangely make,—here, then, I say, we have sprinkling and immersion both unmistakably mentioned: sprinkling in such a way mentioned as to render it certain that sprinkling cannot be baptism; immersion in such a way mentioned as to render it certain that baptism must be immersion.

In conclusion, we may say that there is no symbolic import of baptism suggested in Scripture which does not require, in order to satisfy it, that baptism should be immersion. Baptism symbolizes the Saviour's death and his resurrection; it symbolizes the believer's death to sin and his resurrection to righteousness; it apparently symbolizes the mystery of the new birth, or regeneration; it symbolizes the fact of the believer's union and identification with Christ: it symbolizes the fact of the believer's incorporation into one body with his brethren; it symbolizes the idea of the believer's purification from sin. In all these symbolic relations of baptism, sprinkling fails to be a symbol, and so fails

to be baptism; while, in the same relations, immersion as a symbol is its own sufficient vindication.

Is it safe, is it obedient, to wreck all this precious preaching and teaching power of an ordinance of the Lord—upon what? Upon a caprice, an assumption, a tradition of men.

CHAPTER XV.

BIBLICAL "BELITTLING" OF BAPTISM.

ONE of the most pronouncedly anti-Baptist of the Pædobaptist journals lately, in discussing baptism, used the word "belittled" in a manner to challenge attention. It said that "Christ and his disciples have in no other case [than that of baptism] shown the least interest in ritualistic questions, but have consistently belittled them." It seems thence to infer that baptism too, as a "ritualistic question," is authoritatively "belittled." It has occurred to me that a fair exhibition of the facts as to this point might just now be timely. The real place that baptism occupies in the inculcations of the New Testament is a point not always adequately understood by Baptists, and is by Pædobaptists in general, as I believe, very strikingly misunderstood.

"Suppose that you Baptists are right in your views as to what baptism properly is, and as to what persons may properly be baptized; still, are you not making the whole subject far more *important* than Scripture makes it?" Some such question as this would, no doubt, pretty fairly represent the attitude of mind toward the discussion of the subject of baptism which a very large number—perhaps the great majority—of

Christian people more or less consciously assume. And it is a very natural attitude of mind, very natural, for those who have not as yet given the matter much serious attention.

And yet, to postpone for a moment our purposed appeal to Scripture, might it not seem that the manifest, the undeniable, *practical* relation which all Christendom maintains to the rite should estop any individual Christian from disparaging the importance of baptism? For what do we observe? We observe all Christendom, the Christendom of to-day, with exceptions comparatively so insignificant that they may without impropriety be disregarded, faithfully, punctiliously practising a rite which goes by the name of baptism. We turn our eyes backward over nineteen centuries of Christian history in the past, and we observe that this has always, without interruption, been the case. Assuredly, the history of the Christian church, the universal present practice of the Christian church, pronounce in favor of the importance of baptism a judgment that it would be presumption on the part of any individual to despise.

But of course a judgment like this, deserving, as it is by immemorial prescription, by universal assent, of our sincere respect, and even of our presumptive concurrence, is nevertheless not necessarily a final and conclusive disposition of the matter. The Bible itself, and the Bible alone, is the court of ultimate appeal. If the Bible reverses the sentence of precedent and example, why, precedent and example, no matter how reverend and imposing, must submit in silence. If,

on the other hand, the Bible sustains the verdict of history and usage, what, then, is there to be said against the voice of such judges speaking in unison? Reason certainly can say nothing except to advise accepting their sentence without demur. To the Bible, then, let us go to see what the Bible may teach as to the *importance* of baptism.

In the first place, Jesus himself was baptized. *He* did not consider baptism too unimportant to receive his attention. It is not the least matter now whether the baptism which Jesus received at the hands of John the Baptist is to be regarded as the same with the baptism which Jesus himself afterward appointed. At all events, the baptism which Jesus appointed is not less important than that which John the Baptist administered; and the baptism which John the Baptist administered was important enough for Jesus to make a long journey to receive it. The baptism which Christ appointed is thus seen to be important from the fact that a less important baptism was sanctioned by Christ's example of obedience to it.

In the second place, Jesus himself baptized. Now, whether Jesus baptized with his own hands or by the hands of his disciples does not signify. He baptized: this is distinctly related in the Gospels. In one case, to be sure, it is also said in connection that Jesus did not himself baptize, but baptized by his disciples. This explanation, however, only makes the fact that Jesus baptized more striking. For some reason—what reason we need not conjecture—Jesus at one period of his ministry chose not to baptize with his

own hands; at the same time, he baptized. Whatever the reason may have been for Christ's not baptizing with his own hands, that reason did not hold for his not baptizing. Baptism was so important that, though he did not administer it himself, Christ still would administer it by his disciples. In addition, accordingly, to the argument for the importance of baptism drawn from Christ's example in being baptized, we have the argument drawn from Christ's example in baptizing.

This, however, is not the whole, nor does it even constitute the greatest part, of the argument that Christ himself, in his own personal act, furnishes for the importance of baptism. Besides submitting to baptism and besides practising baptism, Christ distinctly and expressly enjoins baptism. We might, of course, inexpugnably infer that Christ enjoined baptism from the fact that under Christ's own personal and immediate superintendence and authority Christ's disciples baptized. But we are not left to inference, even where inference is so irresistible as this. Christ's command to baptize survives in express language. Nor does this statement fairly present the case as it is. It was not only in express and unmistakable terms that Christ commanded baptism, but it was under circumstances peculiarly solemn and impressive. He commanded baptism in what would seem to be the very last words that he ever spoke on earth with human lips before his final ascension to the skies. The directions which on that occasion he left with his disciples were few, they were momentous, and—they comprised a direction to baptize. Those

directions were comprehensive of the sum-total of Christian duty, and they accordingly descended to no particulars, with one remarkable exception: that exception was baptism. What do I gather from this? That baptism is of all things in the Christian religion the thing most important? By no means. There are plenty of reasons furnished in Scripture for not taking this view of baptism—of baptism, that is to say, in itself. That baptism, therefore, being, as is abundantly demonstrable from Scripture, not *in itself* of such commanding comparative importance, should yet be mentioned in that brief summary of duty which we call the Great Commission, shows that baptism must draw a significance entitling it to its place in that august statute of the kingdom of heaven from some relation that the rite holds to another idea. What is that idea, and what is that relation? That idea is the idea of return, on the part of the subject, from rebellion against God, of present entire self-consecration to God, of a real though inscrutable identification with God. Such is the idea, and the relation of baptism to this idea is, that baptism means the idea. Hence the language of the command: "Discipling all nations, baptizing them into the [name of the] Father and [of] the Son and [of] the Holy Ghost." Baptism was, and it was to be, the inseparable sign or symbol of this great idea of return to God and incorporation in him. Thus it is to be accounted for that baptizing should be commanded in the Great Commission, not for its own sake, but for the sake of what it signified. So inseparable was the

sign from the thing signified that the thing signified was at once suggested when its sign was named. Is not baptism important? If in Christ's thought the sign was thus nearly one with the thing signified, can we afford to separate the two? Do we not hear a solemn voice saying, What God hath joined together let not man put asunder? But we do put asunder things that God has joined if we either neglect baptism altogether, or put baptism in the wrong place, or put a wrong thing in the place of baptism. Three things, then, in Christ's own personal act show the importance of baptism: *First*, Christ's example in being baptized; *secondly*, his example in baptizing; and *thirdly*, his enjoining of baptism.

Thus much might well suffice for establishing the importance of baptism from Scripture. But Scripture testimony on this point is far from being exhausted. On the great first occasion of preaching that occurred under the Dispensation of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit followed and confirmed the teaching of Christ as to the importance of baptism; for Peter, speaking for the rest of the apostles as well as for himself, and speaking under stress of that awful inspiration which then first descended in power from heaven upon men, told the convinced and convicted, now become obedient, among his hearers, "Repent *and* be baptized, every one of you." That the duty of baptism was not for that single occasion only, nor only for Jews, would need no proof. But proof is at hand; for we read that on a subsequent occasion Peter, having been taught by a vision from heaven that the Gentiles too

were to be sharers with the Jews of the blessings of the gospel, asked aloud, "Can any man forbid water that these [certain Gentiles, that is to say] should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" Peter then "commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Here, at least, Peter apparently, like his Lord during one period of the Lord's ministry, did not baptize with his own hands. But baptism at somebody's hands was a matter of course. Still, it was not left to be simply a matter of course; it was expressly commanded. So important does baptism appear to have been in the inspired view of Peter. That Peter was not in this respect peculiar among the original apostles is evident from the distinct statement that in enjoining baptism he stands forth "with the eleven," manifestly their accepted spokesman, replying on their behalf as well as on his own to questions that were addressed to himself simply in common with them.

The apostle to the Gentiles takes the same view of baptism with those who preceded him in the apostolate. We have his example of personal obedience to the ordinance. We know that he baptized, that he baptized a few at least with his own hands. This Paul says himself; and the connection in which he says it shows beyond the shadow of doubt that under his preaching the baptism of converts was a quite invariable practice. Paul, indeed, tells us that he was like Jesus and like Peter in not generally baptizing with his own hands. This, however, simply serves to teach us that who baptized was not important. It is a

wholly false inference from what Paul says on this point, the inference that he did not attach importance to baptism itself. Quite the contrary, indeed, is implied. Paul was sent, he said, not to baptize, but to preach the gospel; true, but the gospel that Paul preached is seen from Paul's own language to have been a gospel of obedience to Christ that included baptism as the invariable accompaniment of discipleship. But Paul testified to the importance in other ways than by being himself baptized, by himself baptizing, and by uniformly having his converts baptized: he made baptism the means of repeated and varied and most impressive doctrinal and practical inculcation. He did this in such a way that the inculcation depends for its force upon the invariable fact presupposed, of baptism as having occurred in the case of every convert. The inculcation depended, further, for its force upon the form and nature of the rite. That point, however, I do not insist upon here. Let it here suffice to say that these inculcations of Paul draw their force at least from the presumed fact that baptism had occurred in the case of every convert. Would Paul have staked important teaching upon a circumstance not deemed by him important? Or if he would, and if he did, then is not that otherwise unimportant circumstance thereby made important? Peter, too, alludes to baptism in the way of illustration, the terms of allusion being such as to imply that baptism occupied a conspicuous place in the teaching and practice of the apostolic churches.

Thus important in the estimate put upon it in Scrip-

ture does baptism appear to be. Remember that this view of baptism as important is entirely irrespective of the question what baptism is. No matter now as to that. Baptism is something, it is anything, it is a thing unknown; but, whatever it may be, it is important. That point is settled beyond dispute. Now, is it unimportant to determine if we can *what* a thing thus important really is? Is it enough to admit that baptism is so important as by all means to require from us something that we shall call baptizing? is this enough? Or does common sense, does reason, does the spirit of obedience, require that in a matter so important we try to find out exactly what Christ wants to have us do, and then that we scrupulously do just that and nothing else? Do we escape ritualism by painstakingly performing *a* rite if only we do not mind at all to perform *the* rite? Do we not rather with great accuracy fall plumb into the very pit that we think to avoid? What is it but ritualism, the very essence of ritualism, ritualism mere and pure, ritualism with no salt of other element accompanying to save it,—what else, I say, than ritualism thus purified seven times is it to insist at all hazards on doing *something*, something outward, while we lift up our hands and protest that we do not care a penny whether what we do is what was commanded; we only feel that *a* rite must be performed? Yet precisely such, strictly ascertained, is the real meaning of the attitude toward baptism held by large numbers of Christians who honestly, and even indignantly, suppose themselves to be fighting against ritualism in opposing Baptist views. The difference

between Pædobaptists and Baptists at this point is to a great extent the difference between ritualism and obedience. Those who observe *a* rite, not concerning themselves to observe *the* rite, ritualize; those who observe *the* rite because that rite is commanded, obey. Pædobaptists perform *a* rite; Baptists obey *the* ordinance. Baptists simply apply to baptism their constitutive principle of obedience. Well is it if with equal fidelity they apply the same principle to other things of not less importance!

CHAPTER XVI.

A TALK WITH CHRISTIANS NOT BAPTISTS.

OBEYING is what Christ wants of us. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" is his half-severe, half-pathetic way of insistance. But we are very apt to think that obeying is no highly important matter, provided only we have a good excuse for not obeying; at least, we seem to act as if we thought this. Accordingly, what a lavish use of ingenuity in providing ourselves with excuses for not doing just the thing that Christ commands! I have sometimes thought that if we spent as much mental force in seeking to obey as we do in seeking reasons why we need not obey, it would double at once the volume of our obedience. And what necessary thing is there left out of that formula for life to the Christian which should consist in enjoining the increase of obedience to Christ?

I do not narrow this principle to its application to the ordinance of baptism; but to that ordinance the application of the principle is singularly apt. Christ says, "Be baptized;" and, strange to consider, the great mass of Christians, instead of obeying this simple command, deliver themselves up to finding reasons why the command is not to be obeyed. I

purpose here to examine a few of the reasons most commonly advanced for this incredible neglect of obedience.

One says, "Why, I have been baptized. Christ does not require me to be baptized more than once, does he?" *Your* reason for not obeying, then, is that you are not commanded. That fact is certainly an excellent reason, if indeed the fact exist. But are you sure that the fact exists? Are you sure that you are not commanded? What makes you think you are not? "Because I have already been baptized." When did your baptism occur? "When I was an infant." Were you conscious of it at the time? "Of course I was not." You took no active part in it then? "No; it was done for me." What was done for you? Not what was commanded, for the command was, "Be baptized," and of course being baptized was not done for you. You were baptized yourself, were you not? Nobody was baptized in your place, as I understand. *Being baptized* was not, then, done for you? What was done for you? I ask again. "Well, the baptizing, then, was done for me, if you will be so very exact." Now I begin to understand. The baptizing was done for you. Then it was Christ's command to you, an infant, to baptize, and, you being too young yourself to obey, somebody obeyed for you. Is that it? "No; certainly, that is not it. The command to me was, 'Be baptized,' and not, 'Baptize.'" Did you, then, obey the command, "Be baptized"? "No; I was too young. It was obeyed for me." Well, no, not *that* command; for

the being baptized was not done by anybody else for you. You were baptized yourself, you know. What the rest did was to baptize you and to have you baptized. The minister baptized you, and your friends had you baptized. The being baptized was done by you if it was done by anybody. *Was* it done by you? "Certainly I was baptized." Did you *do* the being baptized? "No; it was all done for me." But no; the being baptized was not done for you. Only the baptizing and the having baptized were done for you. You were baptized yourself, you say. The act of being baptized, then, was not done for you. Did you do it for yourself? "I did nothing whatever for myself." If, then, you did not yourself obey the command, "Be baptized," and if your friends did not obey it for you, how, pray, was it obeyed at all? In your case it never has been obeyed. There it stands, as plain as letters can make it, "Be baptized." Instead of obeying it, you tell me you do not obey it. The reason is not because you ever have obeyed it; it is not because anybody ever obeyed it for you. It is simply because somebody once did something else to you. Is that obedience on your part, or is it excuse for not obeying?

Another says, "I do not obey the command, 'Be baptized,' because I have obeyed it once, and no more is desired of me." How did you obey it? By being baptized in your infancy? "No; that was no obedience, for I did nothing then myself. But since then I have adopted that unconscious act as my own, and this is my obedience." Yes, but there was no act

of your own, conscious or unconscious, that you could afterward adopt. You did nothing whatever capable of being adopted as obedience to the command, "Be baptized." So far as the baptism was concerned, you were simply acted upon. The only act conceivable as having then been done by you toward being baptized would be the inward resolution to be baptized. But this act of resolution you were not equal to, and this act, therefore, never existed. You have nothing that you can adopt. "Well, I deliberately, at one time, decided to regard that transaction as my baptism, and act accordingly." Yes, and if "Be baptized" could fairly be interpreted to mean, "Regard a certain transaction as baptism," why then you could claim thus to have obeyed the command. But Christ does not say, "Regard something as baptism;" he says, "Be baptized." You do not obey. Instead of that, you tell me of a substitute for obedience.

Another says—and I am able to use here the actual expression of a Pædobaptist writer, not hazarded in conversation, but deliberately committed to editorial print—"I accept my parents' act of baptism. Thus I suppose myself to have obeyed." You accept your parents' act of baptism, and that acceptance you count as your obedience. Let us see. What was your "parents' act of baptism"? Their "act of baptism" was having you baptized; that, and nothing else, was your "parents' act of baptism." This act of your parents in having you baptized you now accept. What do you mean by "accepting" that act? Do you mean regarding it as your own act? If you do,

you have performed a feat of intellectual sleight-of-hand indeed. You regard what your parents did as something that you did. But let this be supposed accomplished; still, how is this obedience to the command, "Be baptized"? Your parents did not obey that command in having you baptized. The command they obeyed, if any, was one running, "Have this child baptized." If, then, they in their act of baptism did not obey the command, "Be baptized," how can you suppose yourself to have obeyed that command in "accepting" their act? Does your "accepting" of their act put into their act what was not in it before your accepting of it? What ingenious futility in framing excuses for not obeying! Obedience would be very much easier, and much more fruitful!

Another says, "'Be baptized' may mean, 'Be in the condition of having once been baptized;' or it may mean 'Submit yourself to baptism.' I do not care to decide between the two." That is, Christ has told you to do either one or the other of two things, but you do not care which! Is this unconcern on your part consistent with a "tender desire to do your Lord's will"? Is not your unconcern perhaps your excuse for not obeying, offered in place of obedience?

Another says, "Christ never bade, 'Be baptized.' Those are Peter's words, and Peter is not Christ." That such an excuse for not obeying is one sometimes really advanced the following recital will show. I quote from a letter received some time since. The occasion of the letter was a newspaper article, then recently published, in which this same view of obedi-

ence was urged. The incident will serve to make two things plain: first, that there are sensitive consciences among our Pædobaptist brethren; and, second, that these sensitive consciences are hard put to it to quiet themselves with excuses in place of obedience:

"In conversation yesterday with the Rev. Mr. ——, pastor of the —— Street Congregational Church (and one of the most acute minds in the ministry here), reference was made to that article on 'Obedience and the Spirit of Obedience.' In reply to my question, 'How do you meet a thing of that kind?' he replied, 'When I first read that I fairly turned *white;* I thought *he had us sure.* It disturbed me. *I got no sleep that night.* I read it again the next day, and I said, *Surely* there *must* be *some way* out of this. So I read it the third time. Then I saw its *fallacy.* It is this: he lays down his premises in *commandments,* but *cunningly* proceeds to draw his conclusion from *ordinances.*' I denied the reality of his discovery, and added, 'But suppose you are correct, what follows? Is there any *real* distinction between a commandment and an ordinance?' His reply was to the effect that '*Christ* gave the commandments, but the apostles gave the ordinances; that the words of the latter do not carry the same force and authority as the former; that Jesus nowhere commanded anybody *to be baptized:* only the apostles did that.'"

That Jesus transferred the whole of his authority to his apostles in such a sense as to make their inspired teachings equally binding with his own is a principle without which the Christian church could not exist.

When Peter speaks under inspiration, as on the day of Pentecost, it is Christ speaking rather than Peter.

Still another says, "Baptism is an unimportant matter. Literalism in obeying is ritualism." Then you do not think it necessary to obey the command, "Be baptized," and that is *your* reason for not obeying? "Oh, but I do obey; only I do not mind to obey exactly. The spirit is everything. If I have the spirit of obedience, that is obeying." Do I understand, then, that you meet Christ saying to you, "Be baptized," and, replying to him in effect, "Yes, Lord, I have the spirit of being baptized," and rest content with that? "Well, no, not exactly so. I do something that I call being baptized; but whether it really is being baptized, I do not concern myself to inquire. It is the spirit of the rite, not the rite itself, that is important." Just what do you mean by the spirit of the rite? Has the rite a spirit apart from you that perform the rite? "Suppose I say, 'Yes, it has,' what then?" Why, then, I shall ask you, "How can we be sure that we retain the spirit of the rite unless we retain the rite itself?" If the whole rite disappears, the whole spirit of the rite disappears with it, I suppose. But may a part of the rite go, and the whole of the spirit of the rite stay? "Well, suppose now I say, 'No; the spirit of the rite is nothing, but the spirit of me that perform the rite is everything,' then what?" Why, then, this: If the rite is of no account, and your spirit is of all account, which I understand you to hold, pray wherefore perform the rite at all? Have your spirit what it should be, and dismiss the rite altogether. It seems

queer that *a* rite should be vital, and *the* rite be nothing at all in your eyes.

My Baptist brethren, let us see to it that we do not, we also, in our different way, offer to our Lord excuses for not obeying instead of obedience. Frank, open, ready, intelligent, but child-like obedience, not in one thing alone, but in all things; not in one thing chiefly, but in all things alike,—this is safety for us, this is joy to our Lord. May he herein see in us all the travail of his soul and be satisfied!

CHAPTER XVII.

SOME CLASSICAL PROOF-TEXTS FOR INFANT BAPTISM.

PROOF-TEXTS are texts cited in proof of a doctrine that has already been decided upon and put into form. It is by no means always to be presumed that texts thus cited as proof-texts are the texts which originally furnished the doctrine that they are now brought forward to prove. Given a certain doctrine, little matter what the doctrine may be, it is almost an even chance that Scripture, properly ransacked, will be found to yield some text or texts capable of being applied in plausible support of the doctrine. Proof-texts ought assuredly to be selected with the most scrupulous honesty, and with the most scrupulous solicitude to be honest, on the part of those who propose them; at the same time, on the part of those to whom they are proposed there is not only permissible, but obligatory, a degree of vigilance amounting wellnigh to incredulity in scrutinizing the title that they bring to be considered, first pertinent, and then of convincing force.

I enter upon the present examination of certain classical proof-texts for infant baptism with a remark which, I trust, though it may greatly surprise, or even scandalize, some, will not be taken by any as offen-

sively intended. I disclaim such intent when I say that among all the texts of Scripture customarily cited to attest the doctrine or practice of infant baptism there is not a text—not one solitary text—that, supposing the doctrine or practice not already in the thought of the student, would ever have so much as suggested the idea of it, in the faintest suspicion, to his mind. Now, what is to be thought beforehand of a doctrine professing to be scriptural, the scriptural proof-texts for which are every one of them such as not only not explicitly to state the doctrine, but not doubtfully to imply it—nay, not remotely to hint it with the smallest intelligible allusion? Yet such I affirm in advance to be the character of all, without exception, of the proof-texts for infant baptism that are generally cited, or, further, that can be cited from any quarter whatever within the length and breadth of Divine Revelation. Let what I thus broadly affirm be strictly judged by the facts of the case now about to be exhibited.

I take the citations from Scripture subjoined to the article on infant baptism in the Westminster Confession of Faith. These are presumably the chief classic reliances of Pædobaptists for the defence of their tenet against Baptist objection. I propose, then, that we examine in succession all the proof-passages cited for infant baptism in this great historic symbol of faith.

The first is Gen. xvii. 7, 9 in comparison with Gal. iii. 9, 14:

"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an

everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. . . . And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations."

"So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. . . . That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Here we have—what? Why, mention of a "covenant" between God, on the one side, and Abraham, with his "seed after" him, on the other. This in Genesis. In the Galatians a fact is stated as the conclusion of an argument. What fact? The fact that the blessing promised to Abraham is a blessing made common also to others along with Abraham. To what others? To "them which be of faith"—an expression obviously equivalent to saying, "to those who truly believe" as did believing Abraham. Now, of course, this is the inspired interpretation in Galatians of the word "seed" used in Genesis. Who, then, constitute the "seed" after Abraham with whom the "covenant" is established? The answer—an unmistakable answer—is furnished in this passage of the Galatians with which we are invited by the Confession to compare the passage from Genesis. The "seed after" Abraham are those, Jew or Gentile, who exercise faith. Now, surely, that infant baptism is not present here in any smallest hint of the notion, it would be sufficient to say. Something more, however, than this may pertinently be said. It may, for instance, be said that infant baptism is so

far from being contained here by any valid though occult implication, that the just and the salient implication of the passage absolutely forbids the very idea of it. For if baptism is to be considered a "sign" of the "covenant" mentioned, as such replacing circumcision, then the new sign, baptism, should evidently, like the old sign, circumcision, be limited to those included within the covenant. Those included within the covenant Paul clearly states to be those that believe. Do infants believe?

The next passage cited in proof of infant baptism is Rom. iv. 11, 12:

"And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also; and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised."

What have we here? Circumcision is spoken of as the "sign" of a faith on Abraham's part exercised by him before being circumcised. This sign, it is said, Abraham received *after*, not before, exercising faith (that point is made very emphatic) for a particular reason. What reason? This: In order that he might so stand as father to Gentiles not less than to Jews, since Gentiles must needs exercise faith, if they exercise faith at all, without having been previously circumcised. In other words, if Abraham had, like his descendants, received circum-

cision in advance of exercising faith, he would thereby have failed to be a true father of Gentile believers. But why would he thereby have thus failed? Evidently, because these all were to be called upon to exercise faith before being admitted to membership in the spiritual Israel. Baptism before faith is thus impliedly excluded. If baptism is in any way a substitute for circumcision, the irresistible implication of the passage, then, is that baptism must be in the case of Gentiles, as circumcision was in Abraham's case, a sign of the faith that those receiving it must exercise yet being unbaptized. The whole purport of the passage is to show that Gentiles as much as Jews are inheritors of the blessing promised to Abraham—that, in other words, the blessing follows, not the natural, but the spiritual, line of descent. Not those derived from the loins of Abraham, but those that walk in the steps of Abraham's faith,—these are Abraham's true children, and so joint-heirs with Abraham of the covenanted blessing. It is a sheer mistaking of this whole apostolic representation—nay, a point-blank inversion of it—to conceive that children springing by natural descent from believers are by virtue of such descent promised the blessing of Abraham. But even if thus to conceive were as sound as, in fact, it is unsound, still to conceive further that therefore there is here any suggestion whatever of infant baptism is the purest gratuity. Baptism, in so far as it is the sign of a blessing at all, is the sign, not of a blessing that is yet to be received, but of a blessing that has been already received. Thus, too, in so far as baptism is the sign of faith, it is the sign, not of faith

to be exercised in the future, but, like circumcision in Abraham's case, of faith that has been exercised in the past. Such is the plain implication of what Paul says in the passage before us.

The next proof-passage is Acts ii. 38, 39:

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Here the promise—that is, the promise of the Holy Ghost—is said to be for the Israelites of Peter's day, together with their "children," and for as many besides these as may be "*called*." The Greek word for "children" is one which has not the smallest reference to the age, infant or adult, of the persons so designated. It simply means "posterity," "descendants." This is all that the word means; but if the word meant infants, as it does not, and only infants, as yet more it does not, still the sense of the passage would be that the Holy Spirit was promised, on a certain condition, to infants. There would be in it no possible allusion to the practice of infant baptism unless the allusion were to be found in the command, "Be baptized;" which command, in that case, being addressed in the second person to the subjects, would necessarily have to be obeyed by the subjects themselves or not be obeyed at all. And then, as those same subjects are also commanded beforehand in the same breath to "Repent," it is to be supposed that

obedience to the second command would be preceded by obedience to the first, whereby the infant baptism referred to would be baptism of infant believers, and thus not in the least the same practice with the infant baptism known to the ecclesiastical usage of to-day.

The next proof-passage is Acts xvi. 14, 15:

"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."

From this passage it appears that at Philippi, Lydia, an itinerant vender of purple from Thyatira, was converted and baptized. Her household were baptized with her; hence infant baptism! Consider the assumptions which this Pædobaptist inference implies: it implies the assumption, *first*, that Lydia was a mother; *second*, that she was at that time the mother of at least one infant; *third*, that this infant was with her while she sojourned in Philippi; *fourth*, that the infant was baptized. Besides, if this passage teaches that an infant was baptized in virtue of Lydia's faith, it just as much teaches that the adult members of Lydia's household were baptized on the same ground.

With the foregoing passage is to be associated another, likewise cited in the Westminster Confession—namely, the account, occurring in the same chapter, of the baptism of the jailer's household:

"And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway."

The verse preceding this states that to the jailer and "to all that were in his house" "the word of the Lord" was spoken. The verse following states that the jailer "rejoiced, *believing* in God with all his house." The jailer and all that were in his house were preached to, the jailer and all his house rejoiced, believing, the jailer and all his house were baptized; hence infant baptism! Well, Baptists are ready, always and everywhere, to baptize infants that may be preached to, and that, having been baptized, rejoice, believing. That kind of infant baptism they highly approve. The more of it the better.

The next proof-passage is Col. ii. 11, 12:

"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

Hence infant baptism! An exclamation-point is really all the comment that such a citation requires.

The next proof-text is 1 Cor. vii. 14:

"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

Here it is said that in some sense a heathen husband is "sanctified," or made holy (the Greek for "sancti-

fied" is one and the same in root with the Greek for "holy"), by the Christian wife, while likewise the heathen wife is made holy in some sense by the Christian husband; for which reason the offspring too, otherwise unclean, are "holy;" hence infant baptism! Again, nothing else could be so appropriate a comment as mere punctuation on an inference like this. Do not Pædobaptists see that if the "holiness" here said to attach, under certain circumstances, to children entitles those children to baptism, the same "holiness," said equally to attach, under like circumstances, to the heathen husband or wife, entitles that heathen husband or wife also to baptism? If infant baptism is here, then a good deal more than infant baptism is here—a good deal more that no earnest Pædobaptist would desire to find.

The next proof-text is Matt. xxviii. 19:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Christ says, Make all the nations disciples, baptizing *them*—that is, the disciples. Hence baptize infants *before* you make them disciples! For a fuller treatment of this text the reader is referred to Chapters VIII. and IX.

The next proof-passage is Mark x. 13–16:

"And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for

of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

Here an occasion is described on which, if ever it was to occur, the Saviour would baptize infants. He does not do so, he does not command to do so, he does not say anything whatever about such a thing; hence infant baptism! Luke xviii. 15–17 is a similar account, of which a similar remark may be made. And so closes the whole presentation of the scriptural case for infant baptism as it is set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

The writers on rhetoric warn us that there is such a thing as refuting excessively. We may, they tell us, go so far in destroying the arguments of our adversaries that our adversaries will be rather vexed than persuaded. I feel that Baptists, arguing with Pædobaptists, are constantly in danger of committing this rhetorical blunder. People generally are not fond of admitting that they have really no good reason whatever for their beliefs. But, then, if infant baptism is wholly non-scriptural, as Baptists firmly maintain it to be, why is it strange that Scripture should contain not simply not much, but absolutely not a shred, of evidence in its favor? Not one shred of evidence in a case in which, since certainly the question concerns a very important matter alike of faith and of practice, there should, if infant baptism is truly scriptural, be found to be an ample web of evidence from Scripture—a web

woven both close and strong. We have an obvious dilemma. Either infant baptism is scriptural or it is not. If it is not, then Scripture, of course, should know nothing of it. And can any candid and intelligent Pædobaptist consider well the case for it, thus presented in the classical proof-texts of the Westminster Confession, and, laying his hand on his heart, say that he should ever so much as have thought of infant baptism from reading these texts if infant baptism had not been previously in his mind?

The thoughtful ponderer of these proof-texts will of course perceive that there was in the mind of those who prepared them the underlying idea of a relation between circumcision and infant baptism such that the latter supersedes or replaces the former. The relation between circumcision and infant baptism I elsewhere consider sufficiently at large under the title of "Scriptural Infant Baptism." Here, however, I have a simple suggestion to make bearing on the same point. Let me ask Pædobaptists this question: Suppose it established and granted that there is indeed a well-warranted rite of infant baptism designed to take the place of circumcision; still, how does it follow thence that infant baptism should take the place of baptism subsequently received on personal profession of faith? Circumcision certainly did not do this. Why, then, should infant baptism do it, if it merely takes the place of circumcision, as antitype of type?

CHAPTER XVIII.

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY'S *OBITER DICTUM* ON INFANT BAPTISM.

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY'S *Rhetoric*, like everything else from the pen of that eminently sensible writer, is full of just and sound and wise suggestion. The things that are said as if incidentally and by the way, the *obiter dicta*, are often not less valuable than the things that belong to the main drift of discussion. It is one of the most salient characteristics of this book that the illustrations are generally much more than illustrations. The didactic bent of the author is a gravely moral didactic bent; and if he gives an example of a certain species of argument, he is very apt to make his example teach some independent practical lesson of its own. The opinions of the writer on a great variety of topics are thus put into the possession of the reader.

A curious case of characteristic illustration, in which the clergyman of the Church of England qualifies the author of a treatise on rhetoric, occurs on pages 144–45 of the American (New York) edition. The Archbishop (and it seems doubly natural and fit to name him such in the present connection) is engaged with discussing the topic of the

burden of proof. He seeks to show how desirable it is for the person arguing not to undertake the burden of establishing a point which it does not fairly belong to him to establish. The following is one of his examples:

"The burden of proof, again, lay on the authors of the Reformation: they were bound to show cause for every *change* they advocated; and they admitted the fairness of this requisition and accepted the challenge. But they were not bound to show cause for *retaining* what they left unaltered. [It is a weakness of this strong writer to be fond of his italics.] The presumption was, in these points, on their side; and they had only to reply to objections. This important distinction is often lost sight of by those who look at the doctrines, etc. of the Church of England, as constituted at the Reformation, in the mass, without distinguishing the altered from the unaltered parts. The framers of the Articles kept this in mind in their expression respecting infant baptism, that it ought by all means to be *retained*. They did not introduce the practice, but left it as they found it, considering the burden to lie on those who denied its existence in the primitive church to show *when* it did arise."

The Archbishop here—and the guess seems confirmed by the fact that this passage is matter added by the author to his treatise after his ecclesiastical promotion,—the Archbishop here, I cannot but think, was a little too much for the logician. If it should be conceded that there was a burden of proof resting fairly on Baptist reformers to show that infant bap-

tism did not originate in New-Testament times, this, I think, would overpass the utmost limit of concession logically incumbent on them to make; but to show *when* it did originate—that, surely, would be a transparently absurd burden of proof for them to have assumed. Nearly (not quite) parallel would it be for a Christian apologist, denying the right of Jupiter to divine worship, to assume the task of showing *when* the worship of Jupiter, if it was not coeval with the creation of man, did originate. In truth, however, the Archbishop would almost seem to have seduced the logician to forget the general principle that the burden of proof properly belongs always to him who affirms. At all events, the idea that the exact historical moment of the origin of infant baptism must be ascertained by the opponents of that practice before the unscripturalness of it can be established is a monstrous assumption. Even the idea that it logically belonged to the Reformers to bring positive argument against any practice of the Roman Catholic Church in order to show that practice unscriptural is not to be admitted. Such an idea rests upon the assumption that, independent of other proof, the mere existence of a Roman Catholic ecclesiastical usage affords presumptive evidence that the usage is scriptural. This assumption will not stand for one moment. It would have more plausibility if it were true that the Roman Catholic Church claimed to be exclusively scriptural in doctrine and usage. There would then be the probability in its favor arising from ostensible general consent. The fact, however, is that

the Roman Catholic Church makes tradition of co-ordinate authority with Scripture; so that not even to the loyal child of the church does a presumption exist that a given ecclesiastical usage is scriptural. Where the question is not one of Scripture at all—where, on the contrary, it is simply a question of expediency—there, I readily grant, it might rest on the man who opposes what exists—that is, it might rest on him as practically necessary, though by no means as logically necessary—to show cause why it should not exist. Quite otherwise is it in a case like that of infant baptism. To say that simply because infant baptism is a usage of the Roman Catholic Church therefore it is probably a scriptural usage—this it would perhaps do for a bishop to preach in the discharge of his episcopal functions, but it will hardly do for a logician to assert in a treatise on rhetoric. I mean, of course, that in a sermon addressed to hearers like-minded with the preacher such a point would probably pass without challenge; but a challenge sooner or later it must inevitably meet occurring in a formal text-book of science. The only sound principle in a question like this is to maintain that logically, on every usage claiming to be scriptural, the burden of proof for ever lies to show itself scriptural. Let infant baptism accept its proper burden and bear the burden if it can.

I cite Whately against Whately—Whately the Protestant against Whately the Pædobaptist unconsciously disguising himself from himself in the mask of a

teacher of rhetoric. In his treatise on *Corruptions of Christianity* (p. 143, American edition) Whately adopts from Bishop Hurd's *Rise and Progress of Christianity* the following just sentiments, which, had they been opportunely present to the Archbishop's mind at the proper moment, might have exerted a happy influence in modifying his curious *obiter dictum* on infant baptism:

"It might seem at first that the apostolic precedents were literally binding on all ages; but this cannot have been intended; and for this reason, that the greater portion of the apostolical practices have been transmitted to us, not on apostolical authority, but on the authority of the uninspired church, which has handed them down with an uncertain mixture of its own appointments. *How are we to know the enactments of the inspired rulers from the uninspired?*" The Italics are my own.

Whately advances to other examples illustrative of the topic of the burden of proof. In doing so he proposes—or seems to propose, for this painstakingly perspicuous writer becomes here discomposingly vague—a distinction between *usage* and *doctrine* as to the proper place for the burden of proof. The usage would appear, according to him, to be its own evidence, while the doctrine must bring evidence for itself from Scripture. "The fair *presumption*" is, he says, that all "*doctrines*" "professing to be essential parts of the gospel revelation" will be found "distinctly declared in Scripture." "If any one maintains," Whately continues, "on the ground of tradi-

tion, the necessity of some additional article of faith (as, for instance, that of purgatory) or the propriety of a departure from the New-Testament precepts (as, for instance, in the denial of the cup to the laity in the Eucharist), the burden of proof lies with him. We are not called on to prove that there is no tradition to the purpose—much less that no tradition can have any weight at all in *any* case."

The Protestant Archbishop overlies once more the logical writer on rhetoric. Surely, if infant baptism is a usage, the Lord's Supper in one kind is a usage no less. It is hard to see how in the case of infant baptism the burden of proof lies on one side, while in the case of the Supper in one kind the burden of proof lies on the other. Whately seems to imply that the Supper in one kind transgresses a precept—I suppose, the precept, "Drink ye *all* of it." But is that precept any more distinct and specific than the precept, "Be *every one* of you baptized," addressed as a command to those capable of rendering obedience? Yet infant baptism as a usage prevents the compliance of believers with a definite precept of Christ's as much as does denial of wine to the laity. For those who are baptized in infancy, although they do not in being so baptized obey any command, are practically prevented from subsequent obedience by the usage of infant baptism; which usage, be it observed, includes not simply the act itself, but also the superseding of any fulfilment whatever of the command undertaken voluntarily on the part of the believer.

Besides, the distinction attempted to be established

by Whately between usage and doctrine as to the methods of proof severally applicable is a vicious distinction. Each ecclesiastical usage has a doctrine connected with it. In truth, the usage is itself a doctrine expressed in act or symbol.

The matter is capable of being presented in a different way. Whately commends the decision of the framers of the Articles as to infant baptism—their decision to the effect that it ought to be *retained*. Now, why ought it to be retained? Because it had existed previously. But of course not for that bare reason. No; for the reason implied in that reason, namely—Well, what? How would Whately express himself? It seems doubtful, his language not being quite clear. Would he say, "Infant baptism ought to be retained, because the fact that it existed raised a presumption that it was scriptural"? Hardly; for the practice of the Roman Catholic Church did not profess to be scriptural exclusively, and therefore, so far was the existence of a practice from proving that the practice was scriptural, the existence of it did not even prove that anybody thought it was scriptural. Would he say, "Infant baptism ought to be retained, because the fact that it existed raised a presumption that it was, though not scriptural, still coeval with the origin of the Christian church"? That, then, makes tradition co-ordinate with Scripture in authority, which surrenders at once the whole Protestant principle.

The presumption from the existence of the practice, accordingly, is not necessarily either that infant baptism is scriptural or that Rome conceived it to be scriptural;

it is not even that infant baptism is coeval with Christianity. It is simply that Rome chose to define it as being so. The presumption supposed by Whately practically vanishes altogether, and the opposite presumption rather obtains.

If we were disposed to push the *argumentum ad hominem* against Whately, we might say with reference to infant baptism what he says with reference to purgatory and the Lord's Supper in one kind: "It is for *him* to prove, not merely generally that there is such a thing as tradition [for Whately apparently gives up proof from Scripture in favor of infant baptism, and virtually relies on tradition] and that it is entitled to respect, but that there is a tradition relative to each of the points which he thus maintains, and that such tradition is on each point sufficient to establish that point."

I propose a dilemma. Either the presumption conceived by Whately to lie in favor of infant baptism on account of the existence of the practice at the time of the Reformation,—either this presumption is a real presumption, a sound logical one, one that belongs to the reason of the case, or else it is a merely relative presumption, having its support in the opinions of a class of people, and therefore well or ill founded according as their opinions are wise or unwise. In the latter alternative the presumption is not a logical, but only a practical, presumption; not one that the opponents of the practice are bound to meet, but only one that, as to a class of people, they will find it desirable to meet if they wish to convince that class. Either, then, the presumption is absolute, sound in itself, warranted by

reason, or it is relative, existing merely in the prejudice of sense, a subjective presumption. Which is it?

Let us suppose the former—an inherently valid presumption. But now just what is this presumption, supposed to be valid? Here we are left in necessary doubt, for Whately's language is vague. *First*, it seems the presumption that infant baptism is, indefinitely, a thing that "ought to be retained"—retained, but *why* retained does not clearly appear. *Next*, it seems that infant baptism, is, more definitely, "coeval with the primitive church"—this as distinguished from being scriptural. As we advance and tradition is impliedly set aside by the writer, the presumption finally seems to be that infant baptism is scriptural.

It is really difficult to argue with a writer who expresses himself so loosely as Whately surprises us by doing in this place. For instance, closely consider what he says in the following sentence: "In the case of any *doctrines*, again [as if infant baptism were not a doctrine as well as a practice!], professing to be essential parts of the gospel revelation, the fair presumption is that we shall find all such [that is, all such as *profess* to be essential parts of the gospel revelation] distinctly declared in Scripture." Understood strictly, this is a ridiculous assertion. I use the adjective deliberately: it is simply a ridiculous assertion. For what does it say? It says that any doctrine claiming to be an essential part of gospel revelation is, *ipso facto*—that is, solely by virtue of its own claim for itself—to be presumed scriptural. Simply because a doctrine makes the pretension the presumption is that the pretension

is true! This is what Whately says, but it is, of course, not what Whately means. He means that a doctrine professing to be a part of gospel revelation, *if it be really such*, will presumably be found plainly stated in Scripture—a very good meaning, however ill expressed, and applicable to the *doctrine* underlying the practice of infant baptism.

But we were trying to examine the validity of Whately's presumption in favor of infant baptism. We find this difficult to accomplish, because it is difficult to ascertain what the presumption is whose validity we are testing.

If the presumption be this, that infant baptism ought to be retained simply because it exists, then the same presumption holds in favor of retaining the whole system of Romanism, since that also exists. But as soon as we begin to reform a system we abandon the presumption in favor of that system; we challenge the whole system to show cause for its continuing to be. To us, at least, who assume to reform the system, no presumption lies in favor of the system: it is under judgment. To us it stands or falls, part by part, as part by part it can demonstrate or not its title to be. Practically, it may be convenient and wise to let stand what we do not see reason to overthrow; but logically, when once we have begun to reform, to us there is no longer presumption in favor of retaining. If Whately's presumption, therefore, be that infant baptism should go on existing, simply because it exists, the presumption is not sound—at least, such seems to be the common sense of the matter. But, however this

may be decided, it still is quite wide of any right course of discussion on a point like infant baptism seriously to go through the process of weighing the presumption that a thing ought to go on being, merely because it is found being. We may well enough grant that, even in ecclesiastical matters, some things should exist which are not distinctly set forth in Scripture; but such things must not claim to be scriptural, and they must not claim to be divinely ordained in any other than that general sense in which all things desirable are a part of divine providence. If the presumption, therefore, be that infant baptism ought to exist purely because it has existed and does exist, I challenge even that presumption, but waive my challenge and say that in such a discussion as the present the presumption is impertinent and null. "Has infant baptism *special* divine authority in its favor?" is the question. That question the presumption alluded to does not even touch.

What would touch it is a presumption that infant baptism is scriptural, which we have seen to be an unsound presumption. What would touch it is, again, a presumption that infant baptism, though not scriptural, is yet of apostolic institution. This presumption depends upon history, or, in default of history, on tradition. There is no history; and tradition, if there were that, is not to be trusted.

We go, accordingly, to the other horn of our dilemma. The presumption, whatever the presumption be guessed to be, is not a presumption valid in logic. It must therefore be, if it exist at all in any sense, merely

a relative presumption, which in plain language we had better call by the name of what it is—a prejudice. The presumption in favor of infant baptism is thus simply a prejudice existing in men's minds. In what men's minds? Why, of course, in the minds of those men who approve infant baptism. But those men will raise no "objections" to the practice. The "objections" to be "replied" to, which Whately's language represents him as conceiving to arise, will proceed from those who do not approve, but oppose, infant baptism; who, therefore, have no prejudice or presumption in favor of the practice. The prejudice, accordingly, or presumption—call it by whichever name you will—is absolutely without aggressive argumentative force. It cannot be appealed to in the course of controversial discussion, for the very good reason that it has no existence in the minds of those against whom the argument is conducted. Such a presumption has nothing whatever to do with the matter of burden of proof. The true place of the burden of proof cannot be determined by it, since it is itself a purely relative and subjective thing, never for a moment even existing where it is once candidly denied to exist.

If the Pædobaptist and the anti-Pædobaptist meet for discussion of Pædobaptism, each seeking to make a convert of the other, evidently the proper course for either to pursue would be this: Abandoning any and every presumption that exists only for himself, to try conclusions quite as if such presumption were out of the question. The Pædobaptist, on the one part, would know that, unless he could bring positive argument to

establish his view, his antagonist would, ostrich-like, plunge his head deep in the sand of his cherished imaginary presumption and successfully resist contrary conviction; while, on the other part, the anti-Pædobaptist would, in default of positive confutation, hold out for his opinion despite any presumption existing in his adversary's mind which he himself did not acknowledge to be real and sound. This merely relative presumption, existing for only one side in the dispute, in itself a pure prejudice, justified or not according to the reason on which it rests—a reason to be canvassed freely as if there were no foreclosing consideration in the case,—such a prepossession, I say, self-evidently, has no force to devolve the burden of proof either this way or that. A counterpoising presumption may always conceivably be adduced. If, for instance, the Pædobaptist says, "I presume that infant baptism ought to stand, because it is a part of Roman Catholicism," the anti-Pædobaptist may reply, "*I* presume—and for the same reason—that it ought *not* to stand." Here are two presumptions opposing each other, presumably of equal validity. Let them destroy each other and leave the burden of proof unaffected.

The burden of proof in every case is assumed by that party, whichever it is, who *begins* the discussion with affirming his view. If he is able on challenge to appeal to a consideration which creates a presumption, admittedly valid, in his favor, then that appeal instantly shifts the burden of proof to the contrary side. If the contrary side is able to adduce a consideration outweighing this first presumption, then the burden of

proof returns to its original place. It continues exchanging its place to the end of the argument. If at the end the affirmer shall appear to have advanced an argument not answered by his opponent, then the affirmer has prevailed. If, on the other hand, every argument advanced by the affirmer has been satisfactorily answered, then the burden of proof rests still with him. He must lift it and shift it, or he has been beaten. It is enough always to resist mere affirmation with mere denial. One man's "No" is to be supposed as good as another man's "Yes." The affirmer must meet a challenge of his affirmation with proffer of proof; the burden of proving belongs to him. If he can begin by pointing to a presumption in his favor, he has done all that in the first instance can logically be demanded. The slightest argument, presumption or other, advanced by him shifts the burden of proof to the side of him who denies. The burden of proof, I say, lies with the affirmer; but this is not in the least because there is some presumption capable of being alleged against him. The burden of proof lies with the affirmer simply because he affirms. The simple truth is, Whately was too much a sectary to be a logician when he was using the present illustration. His practical interest always did predominate over his speculative. This disposition of his mind saved him from many errors, but it at the same time involved him in some.

It is a great thing to escape the effect of environment. Few—none, perhaps—do this. We have to watch ourselves constantly, and we have to watch others, or what is mere unconscious prejudice will

again and again impose itself on us for right reason and logic. Pædobaptism is not necessarily out of place even in a treatise on rhetoric; but lame logic is out of place wherever it hobbles.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOW INFANT BAPTISM PREPARED FOR THE PAPACY.

THE Baptist depends on the Bible, and not on history—or, if on history, then only on the history contained in the Bible—for the peculiar views which he holds in distinction from the Pædobaptist. Still, extra-biblical history—that is, history outside of the Bible—he also finds full of confirmatory instruction on his distinguishing tenets. He does not look primarily to any consequences of disobedience to Christ to teach him either the duty or the importance of obedience. That such obedience is a duty, and that the duty is important, are points to him sufficiently plain from the Bible. The importance, however, of the duty of obeying Christ—the importance, observe, of the duty, not the duty itself—he recognizes as yet further most impressively illustrated by the teachings of history respecting the consequences of disobedience.

Take, for example, the matter of infant baptism. Whether infant baptism obeys Christ or not is a question which can be answered only from Scripture; whether that question itself is highly important or not is a point which can well be illustrated from history. If it should turn out that but for infant bap-

tism the Papacy could never have arisen, this indeed would not prove that infant baptism was unscriptural. For it is also true that but for Christianity the Papacy could not have arisen; and certainly Christianity is scriptural. But it emphatically would prove that infant baptism, if it is a deviation from Scripture, is a deviation from Scripture of very considerable moment.

Now, precisely this, I suppose, can be demonstrated —namely, that infant baptism was indeed a condition without which the Papacy could not have been developed. Mark, if you please, I do not affirm that infant baptism was the producing cause of the Papacy. I affirm only, and this I undertake to demonstrate, that infant baptism, whether scriptural or not, was a necessary, an indispensable, precedent and concomitant condition of the development of the Papacy. I seek thus to show that the question of the scripturalness or unscripturalness of infant baptism is not a question to be dismissed as of little practical importance. The question is of great practical importance; and those who support infant baptism assume a grave responsibility in doing so. On the other hand, Baptists who oppose infant baptism—or, rather, who maintain a principle of obedience to Christ inconsistent with infant baptism—have not taken their stand on behalf of a barren, however abstractly valid, principle. I believe it may be made to appear rationally probable that the simple acceptance in good faith, and the consistent practice of, the Baptist principle of obedience to Christ, *solely in its application to the matter of baptism*, would have been

by itself sufficient to render the development of the Papacy, with all the dreadful mischiefs incident to that system, historically impossible.

Of course I do not mean that if, in addition to those other matters of commandment which actually did receive the attention of the Christian world, the Baptist principle of obedience to Christ had been applied to the matter of baptism, that difference alone would have made the Christian world so much better that it would have escaped, as by its own enhanced and superior virtue, the corruptions of which I have spoken; I mean nothing so absurd as a claim like that would be. What I mean is, that with no more of the Christian spirit existing than really did exist, yet if that Christian spirit had taken the direction of obedience to Christ in the matter of baptism, this one additional circumstance of outward conformity alone, trifling though it may seem, is such, in its inevitable practical tendency, as, had it taken place, to have precluded the possibility of the Papacy. Remember, I do not say that neglect to obey Christ in this one particular article of his will produced the Papacy. No; that great corruption had a deeper root than this, or than any, specific act of disobedience. I do say, however, that without the specific act of disobedience which occurred in the matter of baptism the particular form of corruption which we call the Papacy could not have taken its rise. In short, Pædobaptism did not originate the Papacy, but Pædobaptism made the Papacy possible.

How? In this way: The indiscriminate baptism

of infants—and of adults as well, without reference to their previous regeneration, which has been the Roman Catholic practice, justified by the same reasoning that justifies infant baptism—introduced a constantly increasing, and, of course, in the end a greatly preponderating, element of unregenerate membership into the church. This nominally Christian, but essentially worldly and hostile, element in the church was not passive there; on the contrary, it was self-asserting and active. Instinctively, habitually, intensely, it sought to serve itself. Its spirit was the spirit of the world and of the devil. It behaved itself after the fashion of its kind. It was ambitious, greedy, grasping. It was always watching its chance for self-aggrandizement. The pure and spiritual portion of the church it outnumbered and outvoted. It had no scruples, and it could with corresponding advantage reach out its hand to clutch pre-eminence and power. As fast as, by the perfectly natural tendency of things, an hereditary succession to church-membership made the church gradually coincident and identical with society, so fast the various offices of the church became objects of ambition to unscrupulous self-seekers. The development of the Papacy, with all its attendant evils, was the result—and it was a perfectly legitimate, a simply natural, result—of such a state of things. That the originally spiritual church should change its character and become a vast temporal establishment was to have been expected. The secular spirit could not but secularize the church of which it had taken dominant possession.

The point which I here make—that only through infant baptism, or through some equivalent perversion of the will of Christ, could the necessary condition have been supplied for the complete and permanent secularization of the church, and so for the development of a corruption like the Papacy—is a point calculated to strike the evangelical Pædobaptist with incredulity, with amazement, even with horror. It may be well to pause and reason the matter calmly and candidly.

The Pædobaptist objector will be likely to ask, "Is not the world itself, in the midst of which the church has its present place of sojourn,—appointed still to be in it, though not of it,—is not this omnipresent, this unescapable, this penetrating, world a force without for secularization, a force incessantly operative? Is not this an external force strong enough to dispense with any reinforcement from a source within, such as you imagine infant baptism to be, in producing an historic effect like the Papacy? Has not your polemic sectarian zeal in behalf of a favorite tenet led you to make, in short, the pregnant discovery of a very fine mare's nest? Surely we of this country and this age see enough right before our faces of the influence of the world in secularizing the church to teach us a wiser philosophy of history than what you are propounding."

Well, let us fairly consider the objection. The point, be it borne in mind, against which the objection is brought is this: The church, in order to be thoroughly and permanently secularized, must be operated upon by

a secularizing force supplied from within itself and working within itself. Such a secularizing force is furnished in infant baptism, and could not be furnished in anything else than infant baptism or something of an equivalent nature. Against this the objection is brought that the world outside of the church is of itself a force adequate to produce the effect in question.

I say, No. What is a secularized church? It is a church in which the worldly spirit not merely exists, but is dominant. It is a church, therefore, in which the members are most of them worldly men. Now, what was there in the primitive church to tempt worldly men to join it? At first very little—something, no doubt, for a few worldly men apparently did join it. Gradually, however, after a time, as the church gained common credit, worldly men would be attracted to join it in order to share this credit. Such a tendency of things we may any of us observe existing now. This tendency is, of course, a tendency toward secularization of the church. If, in any case, the tendency went forward indefinitely, the issue, of course, would be thorough secularization at last. But the tendency does not, in any case, go forward indefinitely; it comprehends always within itself a law of necessary, inevitable, self-limitation. When the world has thus flowed into the church long enough and strong enough to bring down the general average reputation of the church quite to equality with the world, the temptation to worldly men to join the church is then exhausted. One of two things now happens:

either the church reforms itself, expelling the secular and secularizing element, or else the church succumbs and ceases to exist. Certain it is that a church depending on accessions from the world to continue its life will not have its life continued when accessions from the world cease; and accessions from the world tempted by worldly motives—that is, accessions consisting of unregenerate persons, accessions composing the secularizing element—will no longer come to the church after worldly motives cease to draw them. The dilemma, therefore, is rigorous. The church will either cease to exist or cease to be secular.

The argument thus seems complete and demonstrative—if an argument probable in its nature can ever be demonstrative—that Pædobaptism supplied a necessary condition of the Papacy. To show in sequel and complement how the Baptist principle of obedience to Christ applied to the matter of baptism would have worked to prevent this disastrous historic result will be the aim of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XX.

HOW BAPTIST PRACTICE WOULD HAVE PREVENTED THE PAPACY.

WE have in the present chapter to consider how the Baptist principle of obedience to Christ in the matter of baptism would have operated in prevention of the Papacy. This Baptist principle is often misconceived. It should be steadily borne in mind that not immersion for baptism, but baptism only to actual converts, is the real chief distinguishing tenet of Baptists.

Under the prevalence of this principle none, of course, would have been baptized but supposed converts, voluntary candidates, professing belief and honestly desiring to yield obedience. The nominal church, both according to the Roman Catholic and according to the Baptist idea, properly consists of baptized persons, and only of such. The difference, however, is more serious than the resemblance. Rome baptizes without reference to precedent regeneration, while Baptists make precedent regeneration a condition of baptism. Under the dominance, therefore, of this Baptist idea, the nominal church would have consisted—not, indeed, exclusively, but always, it is to be presumed, preponderantly—of regenerate persons.

I speak now as it were in the gross, and in the language of a large generalization. Temporary exceptions might conceivably occur—in a case, for example, like that of the conversion, so called, of Constantine, or like that of the conventionally pious Louis XIV. of France. Such influence would set a fashion of professing religion and tempt many not regenerate to make the religious profession; but the fashion would be temporary, for the influence would be temporary on which it depended. To produce a continuously and permanently secularized church there would be necessary two conditions—namely, *first*, a secularizing influence to operate permanently and continuously; and *second*, opportunity for this secularizing influence to operate from within, and not from without. A secularizing influence operating upon the church from without might, no doubt, succeed in secularizing the church for a time; but not for an indefinitely long time, for the tendency of a secularization so effected would be to extinguish the church; which result would be certain to ensue unless the church roused itself betimes to expel the secularizing influence. I therefore repeat again here what I said in a previous chapter: For the church to continue to exist, and at the same time continue to be secularized, it was necessary that there should be a spring of secularizing influence supplied from within itself and working within itself. Such an internal spring of secularizing influences, flowing perennially, was furnished in the doctrine and practice of infant baptism. On the other hand, with the Baptist doctrine and practice of obedience to Christ in force as

to the matter of baptism, the church would scarcely at any moment—certainly for no great number of consecutive moments—have included within its communion a preponderant element of unregenerate souls. Some such souls, no doubt, it might often—perhaps would always—have included. The regenerate, too, would not have been perfectly sanctified, and so corruptions would have found entrance into the church.

But note now the difference between the case supposed and the case that actually existed. In the case supposed—that is, under the sway of Baptist principles applied to baptism—the corruptions entering would have been discovered by the vigilance and withstood by the fidelity of the spiritual majority. Besides, a church thus composed of the elect regenerate would never have tempted to any great degree the ambition or the cupidity of self-seeking men: there would always have abounded outside of such a church opportunities of self-aggrandizement far more attractive than any to be found within it. A corruption like that of the Papacy would thus, in the case of a church true to the Baptist principle of obedience to Christ in the matter of baptism, have lacked two indispensable conditions of successful development—namely, *first*, opportunity; and *second*, temptation offered to ecclesiastical usurpers.

But even if these things were not as I have claimed, still it would be true that such a church would have constantly been surrounded by a vastly outnumbering society of non-professors who would never have had any motive to submit to the despotism of ecclesiastical

usurpers, or to suffer any such monstrous displays of corruption and pride as largely make up the history of the Papal See. Whatever usurpations of power might nevertheless have occurred, these would at least have been confined to a comparatively insignificant church for their theatre. The terrors of excommunication would have been utterly null. There would have been no such thing attempted as spiritual discipline, enforced by temporal sanctions, over the consciences and lives of men. The whole dreadful incubus of ecclesiastical superstition that rested for so many ages on the bosom of the nominal Christian Church, almost extinguishing the very breath of its life, would have been dissipated as fast as it could ever have begun to be formed.

But to the course of argument immediately foregoing and to that presented in a previous chapter I hear the objection: All this is pure speculation. Give us facts, not theories. We want to learn, not what must happen on *a priori* principles, but what has happened as simple matter of history.

This demand I acknowledge to be reasonable, and I reply: Instances in plenty exist of churches that have become secularized, and that, having become secularized, continue to be churches notwithstanding their secularization. The Roman Catholic Church is an instance; the Greek Church is an instance; the Lutheran Church of every country where the Lutheran Church is an establishment of state is an instance; the New England churches such as Jonathan Edwards found them are instances. But in every one of these instances

the secularizing force was of the church itself, and was renewed within the church by infant baptism.

I shift the burden of proof, and I ask objectors to my argument to produce an instance of the other kind —namely, an instance of a church that has become secularized (and that has continued afterward to be a church) through the working of a force exterior to the organization of the church itself. One such instance would be fatal to my argument. I know of none, but I freely expose myself to be confuted with an example.

I cannot claim to be an authority in history, but, positively or negatively, history, I fully believe, would support the thesis that for a corruption like the Papacy infant baptism or some other equivalent device of man is an indispensably necessary condition; this, for the reason, *first*, that the Papacy presupposes a secularized church continuing to exist indefinitely in a secularized condition; and *second*, that to produce such a church nothing is adequate except a secularizing force supplied from within itself and working within itself—a force, in short, like infant baptism.

If such be indeed the teaching of history, then it is no wonder that reform within the church was always a foredoomed attempt. The entrance of corruption was ever by a wider door than that at which the purifying influence could find its way in. Nor, if the argument of this chapter be good, is it longer matter of just surprise that the Baptist churches should have been characterized, everywhere and always, by such general soundness of doctrine? Thoughtful Pædobaptist observers have been puzzled to account for the orthodoxy

which Baptist churches have with such uniformity maintained, and maintained in the absence of authoritative Councils, and even of authoritative standards of faith. The simple principle of obedience to Christ is the clew to the secret; that principle in application to baptism alone tends to exclude the most dangerous force for corruption that ever can threaten the life or the doctrine of a church. The exclusion is, of course, not perfect, but the tendency to exclude is, for Baptist churches, firmly fixed in the very law of their growth. Infant baptism, on the contrary, introduces into the very law of that church's growth which adopts it a force for degeneration. In the case of Pædobaptist churches having an exceptionally favorable environment, especially—if I may deprecate the charge of assumption and frankly say the truth as I hold the truth to exist, especially,—in the case of Pædobaptist churches that feel the presence of a living and aggressive Baptist example and propagandism, the mischiefs of their mischievous principle are to a degree avoided. But the tendency inheres in the principle itself, and cannot be separated from it. We Christians are not out of the suck of the whirlpool of Rome until we adopt in the matter of baptism the principle of simple, straightforward obedience to Christ.

Remember, it was necessary, in order to the full development of the Papacy as that development took place in actual history, that the church should be numerically coincident and commensurate with civil society; in other words, that every member of society where the church existed should be also a member of

the church. This state of things at least must have established itself to such an extent that the exceptions should be practically insignificant. But evidently there was no practicable way to this result —no way practicable and at the same time permanently efficacious— except to introduce every new-born member of civil society into membership with the church during the period of his infancy. The component members of civil society have no option to be members or not of civil society: the moment they are born into the air they breathe, that moment they are born into membership of society. The church at length became as exacting as civil society; she left no option to the individual. By infant baptism she made every new-born child a member of her communion, and so a subject of her discipline. The child was born into the world and into the church at almost the selfsame moment. Birth into the church was accomplished in infant baptism; once baptized, the child was thenceforth helplessly a member of the church. It was not necessary that the baptism should be by proper sacerdotal hands. Baptism by whatsoever hand, in whatsoever mode, performed with the intent to baptize, and if with water enough, applied in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to trickle on the unconscious infant's face or brow, was baptism, accepted as valid for the purposes of the Roman Catholic Church. The baptized child was for ever after a child of the Catholic mother, and entitled to her care even to the extent, if he needed it, of the offices of the Holy Inquisition. Rome makes no pretension to authority over the un-

baptized; but over the baptized, wherever they are found, she holds her right of dominion and discipline. So close is the dependence of the Papacy upon infant baptism for its existence and its power.

In view of Scripture, and in view of history no less, the duty of Baptists is plain. For the sake of themselves and their children; for the sake of Pædobaptists and their children; for the sake of all men now and henceforth; above all, for the sake of Christ,—let them stand fast and be strong in the name of the Lord!

CHAPTER XXI.

SCRIPTURAL INFANT BAPTISM.

BAPTISTS oppose infant baptism, but they practise infant baptism. Baptists do not, however, practise the infant baptism which they oppose. There is a practice of infant baptism which Baptists hold to be unscriptural; this practice is the one now common among their Pædobaptist brethren. They oppose such a practice. But there is a certain different practice of infant baptism which Baptists hold to be in the highest degree scriptural; this practice they uphold and adopt. In fact, so intensely Pædobaptist in theory are Baptists according to their understanding of what scriptural Pædobaptism is, that if their theory were consistently carried out, there would never be any baptisms but baptisms of infants. In this sense, therefore, Baptists may justly claim to be Pædobaptists of the Pædobaptists.

I speak in a parable, my readers will think: I hasten to make my parable plain. In one word, then, this is my meaning: Whereas Pædobaptists, so called, baptize those who are infant in the natural sense of that term, Baptists, so called, baptize those who are infant in the spiritual sense of that term.

Pædobaptists baptize persons soon after their birth

from the womb; Baptists baptize persons soon after their birth from above. Pædobaptists, therefore, are we all, both they and we alike; only they reckon by the flesh, while we reckon by the spirit.

It is curious that our Pædobaptist brethren do not see that the typical meaning of circumcision—if, indeed, circumcision has any typical meaning applicable here—is wholly in favor of Baptist Pædobaptism, and not of Pædobaptist.

I am far from maintaining that circumcision is a true type of baptism. There would be found wanting, perhaps, on close examination, some of the essential characteristics of a true scriptural type. But, granted that the correspondence between circumcision and baptism is sufficient to warrant a rhetorical use of it for purposes of illustration, it will be plain, on a little reflection, that the analogy, such as it is, lends itself for these purposes much more naturally to the service of the Baptist than of the standard Pædobaptist view.

For consider the facts in the case. Ancient Israel was a type of the Christian Church—a *type*, let it be remarked; for ancient Israel *was* not the Christian Church. It was the Christian Church's type. It contained, indeed, the Christian Church in part, as that church may, by an allowable prolepsis in language, be said to have existed before the Christian era. But they were not all Israel which were of Israel—that is to say, the Jewish nation was not commensurate and coincident with the true Jewish Church, the truly believing Jews. The nation was not the church, though

it contained the church. The Jewish nation, notwithstanding, was the *type* of the Christian Church.

Now, of what persons was the Jewish nation composed? Of descendants of the patriarch Abraham. Abraham's natural posterity—natural in a sense, though supernaturally initiated in Isaac, the child of promise—Abraham's natural posterity, I say, through all their descending generations, constituted the Jewish nation. Of the Jewish nationality thus created, circumcision was appointed to be the outward distinguishing mark. The mark of circumcision was regularly affixed during the infancy of its subjects. Those subjects were thus formally and visibly designated as members of the Jewish nation.

So far on the side of the shadow or type. Now, what is to be affirmed, the transition being made to the side of the antitype or substance? If circumcision is the analogue of baptism, what relation shall baptism be declared to hold to membership in the Christian Church, that true antitype of the Jewish nation? Why, manifestly the analogical relation, and no other. What is that analogical relation? To this question there can be but one answer. As circumcision marks offspring in the natural line of descent, so baptism marks offspring in the spiritual line of descent. If the natural children of Abraham were circumcised soon after their birth in the flesh, Abraham's spiritual children are to be baptized in like relation of sequence and nearness to their birth in the Spirit. To baptize natural offspring simply because they are natural offspring, on the ground that circumcision was thus

applied, is to make baptism no longer the analogue of circumcision, but the substitute for it. The church ceases thus to be parallel to the Jewish nation as antitype to type. The two, remaining no longer separate, though like, become identical, instead of being analogous in mode of derivation and persistence. The Christian Church, by logical consistency, so reduced from being the antitype of the Jewish nation, might more truly be described as successor to it and continuer of it. The Christian Church in this way is changed from a spiritual into a natural community. This is what logic, on the current Pædobaptist theory, would make of the Christian Church. The Roman Catholic body and the various state establishments of religion in Europe may serve to show how faithfully logic has been illustrated by history. This, however, introduces a topic too large and too serious to be dismissed with an allusion. The historical aspect of infant baptism as practised by Pædobaptists, so called, will demand treatment by itself. I purpose, on the suitable occasion, to devote to it a separate chapter.

Under the typical polity of the Jewish nation the child could not, of course, be circumcised until he was born. He was born a member of the nation, and then was circumcised as such. If circumcision was to the Jewish nation what baptism was to be to the Christian Church, it follows of necessity that the subject of baptism must be born before baptism of the subject is possible. But what natural birth was to the Jewish nation, that spiritual birth is to the Christian Church. As circumcision could not be performed

until after natural birth, so baptism, by necessity of the analogy, cannot be performed until after spiritual birth. To perform it before is, rightly regarded, a ludicrous anachronism; more strictly still and more seriously, it is a simple and absolute nullity. The person has been born, to be sure, but the Christian has not; and it is the Christian that is to be baptized, for of Christians the church is composed. Baptism, like circumcision, initiates. Theoretically at least, and actually so far as is possible, none are to be initiated into the Christian Church but true Christians. No others can be really initiated, and no others should be formally initiated, unless we are to abandon the principle of a converted church-membership and conform our churches to the Roman Catholic theory. Against this theory, the Baptist churches are, among evangelical bodies, alone in consistently protesting. Their mission of protest, Baptists do not mean to abandon. They have received, they think, this trust from God. They stand for the true infant baptism—the baptism, that is to say, of spiritual infants. The pseudo-Pædobaptism—the baptism, that is to say, of natural infants, persons not yet born into the kingdom of God—they will steadfastly oppose. Scripture, reason, history, cry with one voice in their ears loudly against it. Baptists claim to be the true Pædobaptists, and they hope yet to recall their brethren all to scriptural infant baptism.

CHAPTER XXII.

WHAT "CLOSE COMMUNION" REALLY IS.

RESTRICTED communion, as practised by Baptists, is not positive; it is strictly negative. It does not turn away; it simply does not invite. Not inviting, it naturally does not accept invitations. That is really the whole. Restricted communion does nothing more than just maintain this attitude of *not* doing. What could be less offensive?

But restricted communion offends, nevertheless. Why? Not for what it does, certainly, for it does nothing; hardly for what it does not do, for what it does not do is what no one cares to have done. No one cares to invite, and no one cares to be invited—that is, for the practical purpose of accepting the invitation or of having the invitation accepted. I speak now generally. There are, of course, instances of exception; these may be numerous. They are, however, of no material consequence, being exceptions strictly, and not of the general rule. The general rule is that no one not Baptist wishes to invite Baptists, and no one not Baptist wishes to be invited by Baptists. Restricted communion, therefore, disappoints no one's wish. It merely does not do—what? Why, something that no one wants to have done. Restricted communion, ac-

cordingly, does not offend by what it is in itself. And yet it offends. Why? I ask again. If not by what it is, then how does it offend?

I answer, By its reasons for being what it is. Let restricted communion but give up its reasons, it may retain its practices and nobody will complain. If you only will invite, so our Pædobaptist brethren seem to say,—if you only will invite, you need not. It is because you will not that we want you to. Just say we are welcome, and we shall be satisfied; we do not care to come. That is not it at all. But we should like to have you say "Come." Nay, you need not even say "Come" if you will but agree that you have no conscientious reasons for not saying "Come." We are reasonable. All we ask is that you think we are right. You need not act upon your thought. Just have the thought; we want nothing more.

Something such, I say, is the language of many Pædobaptists toward Baptists. Of course, the language does not take this simple form. But reduce the language often heard from Pædobaptists to its lowest terms, and this is it. Our Pædobaptist friends care nothing for the privilege of coming to our communion-table; they care nothing for our company at theirs. If all was free on both sides, there would practically be very little intercommunion. They care nothing for the fact, but they care much for the sentiment. But it happens to be precisely the sentiment that we care for too; the fact is as little to us as it is to our Pædobaptist brethren. But, on the other hand, the sentiment is as much; we could change the fact, but the sentiment

would abide, and, the sentiment abiding, the changed fact would not serve any purpose. We keep the fact because we keep the sentiment: the two go together. The fact is the sign; the sentiment is what the fact signifies. Without its signification, the fact is nothing. What is the fact, and what is the signification? The fact, in a word, is "restricted communion;" and restricted communion, remember, is the usage of not inviting unbaptized persons to the Lord's Supper and of not accepting the invitation of unbaptized persons to the Supper. Such is the fact; and the signification of the fact is simply this: We think the will of the Lord to be that all believers should be baptized, and that only when baptized should they come to the Lord's Table. If we could give up thinking as we do on this point, we could, of course, very easily give up acting as we do. Our conduct is simply true to our conviction; that is all. If we should change our conduct, then our conduct would cease to represent our conviction. We should act the lie, and not the truth.

Now, conceive our conduct changed with no corresponding change of conviction. We practise "open communion," while we believe in restricted communion —that is to say, holding that no one ought to partake without having first been baptized, we still invite you, our unbaptized brethren in Christ, to a seat at our table. We invite you, but at the same time, true to our conviction, we say to you, "You do wrong in not being baptized before you partake. Nevertheless, come, unbaptized as you are; we make you welcome. Though we warn you you do wrong, never

mind what we say in warning; hear only what we say in inviting. Come, brethren, come! You ought not to, but come sit with us at the Lord's Table." I ask, Would there be any gain to Christian comity if we should practise open "communion" on these terms? Would it be more agreeable to our Pædobaptist brethren to be thus invited and warned in one and the same breath than it is not to be invited at all?

Or suppose a converse case. We are now ourselves politely invited to sit at the Lord's Table with our unbaptized brethren. We accept the invitation, at the same time delivering our souls by assuring our inviters that they do wrong in not being baptized before they partake. We come, for our consciences, we inform them, so far as our own participation is concerned, are quite satisfactorily clear in the matter; but, lest our coming at their invitation should be misconstrued by them to their harm or to the harm of the truth, we carefully purge ourselves in coming by advising our inviters that they, on their part, have no right to press their way to the table save through the Lord's by them yet unopened door of baptism. Pray, tell me, would our courtesy in accepting the invitation so far over-compensate our fidelity in warning our brethren, while we accept it, to go and be baptized before they come to the table themselves, that there would be on the whole a decided access of mutual good feeling in consequence? Would "open communion" on terms such as these be a change worth the while?

Or, now, suppose yet again that we give and take

invitations to intercommunion, not stating our convictions in word, but still holding them the same. Would mutual fellowship be greatly enhanced? That is to say, if our acts were perfectly well known not to represent our silent convictions, would our acts, ostensibly signifying an agreement against which our thoughts all the while were busy protesting,—would these acts, I inquire, be accepted as a valuable contribution to interdenominational comity and love? Would not rather our Pædobaptist brethren justly assure us that as long as our hearts and our consciences were not in our acts of apparent hospitality, those acts were to them worth nothing in the world? I seem to hear them saying with one voice, "Act as you feel, dear brethren. Acts, on your part, contrary to your convictions and feelings, are to us no acceptable sacrifice. We do not care for your acts; or, rather, your *sentiments* are the acts of yours for which alone we do care. Change your sentiments; but, till you do, keep acting in accordance with your sentiments. Acknowledge that we are right: that is what we ask. As long as you refuse to do this, it is no matter to us just *how* you insist on reminding us that we are wrong."

And, after all, is there conceivable any less offensive way than the way of restricted communion in which we can keep testifying to our Pædobaptist brethren our immovable conviction that in a grave matter of obedience to our Lord, both theirs and ours, they are sadly —we will not say wilfully, but strangely and mischievously—wrong?

Yet once more: let all, Baptists and Pædobaptists

alike, bear distinctly in mind just what it is wherein restricted communion consists. Restricted communion for Baptists consists in their practice of not, on the one hand, inviting unbaptized persons to sit with them at the Lord's Table, and of not, on the other, accepting invitations from such to sit at the Lord's Table with them. This is the whole sum of the matter. Restricted communion in itself is simply an attitude of suspense, an act of abstaining. As a sign it signifies a certain most definite conviction—a conviction profound and abiding, and a conviction, moreover, such that it will not submit to be silent. Given the conviction, I ask again, and given the conviction such, is there any way less objectionable, while equally effective, of making it known—any way less objectionable than for Baptists to adopt and consistently to follow the very course which as matter of fact they might find marked out for them by the past and the present consenting example of all Christendom besides? For, in conclusion, it may fairly be added that Baptist "close communion," so miscalled, is exactly the same in principle—in so far, at least, as baptism is concerned—with the practice generally, if not universally, observed by our Pædobaptist brethren themselves. We are neither closer nor more open, neither narrower nor more broad, in our terms of communion than are they. We require baptism before the Lord's Supper; they do the same. They admit that to be baptism which seems to us to be no baptism at all; therein lies the real difference between Baptists and Pædobaptists. We separate, they and we, not at the Lord's Supper, but at baptism.

Our baptism, no doubt, is "closer" than theirs, but it is not closer, we think, than our Lord's. As for our communion, that is restricted upon precisely the same principle as is their own.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONSTRUCTIVE BAPTISM AND CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNION.

A RITE ordained becomes an ordinance. To observe an ordinance truly is not ritualism, but obedience. I speak, of course, in the sphere of positive Christianity, where the ordaining will is Christ's, and not man's. Ritualism talks of rites; obedience talks of ordinances. It is not Baptist vernacular to call baptism a rite; the true idiom speaks of it as an ordinance. Baptists do not ritualize; they obey.

It is the essence of ritualism to regard the rite as a means operative by a virtue inherent in itself; it is the essence of obedience to consider the ordinance as a condition merely, imperative because appointed. The ritualist is nice and careful, lest somehow unawares he impair the spell which his rite is to him; the obedient man is scrupulous, lest he fail somewhere in meeting the exact will of his Master. The ritualist is superstitious in awe of his rite; the obedient man is loyal in awe and in love of his Lord.

Exactness, therefore, is by no means of necessity a note of ritualism; it may quite as naturally be a mark of the purely obedient spirit. Now, when a rite is ordained—that is to say, when a defined external ob-

servance is prescribed—there is inevitably implied in obedience something more than the spirit to obey; a literal act is commanded. Obedience accordingly means the performance of that act, and not merely the spirit to perform it. There is no room here for talking of the difference between the spirit and the letter. At such a point as this, provided only the act be clearly determinable in nature and possible to performance,—at such a point, I say, letter and spirit become one. The spirit to obey would seem certain to issue in obedience; but the spirit to obey is not obedience. When a physical act is commanded, the physical then is an indispensable means of helping the spiritual to obey. To believe otherwise is not so much to fly from ritualism as it is to fly toward rationalism. To be sure, the Sabbath was made for man; but then, after all, even so it remains that something was made for man. The question is, What?

In the present case, however, the ordinance is a very simple imperative contained in two English words representing a single word in Greek: "Be baptized." What the imperative means need not concern us now, but manifestly it means something. Suppose for the moment that it merely means in the largest, vaguest way, "Have water applied to your person in token of discipleship." Still, even with so much latitude of interpretation, the imperative persists, at least, in meaning that. It may be deprived of its true meaning by so wide an inclusion, but surely it is not stripped of all meaning. It continues to address those who are tc be baptized in the second person,

and it bids them do something—bids *them* do something.

Only those who are bidden can obey. Now, certainly the great mass of Christians composing the Pædobaptist communities of Christendom have never, in the plain, unsophisticated sense of obedience, obeyed the command, "Be baptized." The command, observe, is to each person: "Be baptized." No matter, I say again, at this moment exactly what the command imports. It imports, at all events, an act which, in the very nature of the case and from the very meaning of human language, no one can possibly perform save solely the person addressed—that is, the person to be baptized.

There is so much prepossession here that we are constantly in danger of confounding things that differ. Let us remember, then, that we are not disputing now about quantity of water for baptism, more or less; we are not discussing modes of applying water in baptism, this or those. It is not even a question as to what persons, how qualified, may properly be baptized. The point is simply and solely whether a certain command, or *any* understanding whatever of the command, is truly obeyed. We suppose, for the time, that there is no difference of opinion concerning the nature of the command. The words "Be baptized" mean, we will say, the same thing, and no matter what, to both Baptist and Pædobaptist. They are certainly a command, whatever they mean. The question, therefore, is not, "Have I been baptized?" but, "Have I obeyed the command?" Obedience consists, not in

having been baptized, but in having obeyed the command. Not to be baptized, but to obey, is the important thing. The ritualizer is thus found in him who contents himself with the act, but neglects the obedience. If Baptist or Pædobaptist, either of them, ritualizes, it certainly is not the Baptist.

Now, the actual state of the facts in the Christian world is this: The vast majority of Christian professors outside the Baptist churches have never, even according to the most latitudinarian notions of what baptism is, save in their unconscious infancy, been baptized. Nearly every candid Pædobaptist, therefore, if asked, "Have you obeyed the command, 'Be baptized'?" would be obliged to put a sense not entirely simple and natural upon the word "obey" in order to answer "Yes." To the question, "Have you been baptized?" such a person might, perhaps—indeed, he probably would—say "Yes" without hesitation. The answer would simply require an exercise of faith on his part. To say "Yes" to the question, "Have you obeyed the command, 'Be baptized'?" would require something more than an exercise of faith: it would require also an exercise of imagination, or, at least, an effort of reason. He would have to say, "I have been told, and I believe, that I was baptized when a babe; and I now voluntarily and freely adopt my then unconscious submission as my present deliberate act. I have, therefore, obeyed the command." He would evidently thus acknowledge that to the ordinance, "Be baptized," he had rendered, if any obedience at all, then a purely *constructive* obedience.

For the command is not the solecism "Have been baptized;" it is the plain, reasonable, and practicable "Be baptized"—a command perpetually binding till it be obeyed.

To the Baptist, therefore, his Pædobaptist brethren cannot but appear as disobedient in the matter of this ordinance of their Lord. Even upon their own theory of baptism, their obedience is at least only a *constructive* obedience. Their baptism, accordingly, however perfect in fact and in form, is in essence and in spirit only a constructive baptism.

Constructive obedience, in such a case, is no obedience at all to the Baptist; and constructive baptism is no baptism at all to him. So little is the Baptist a ritualizer that the fact of the rite observed is as nothing in his sight compared with the spirit of obedience in the observance. He is utterly at a loss to understand how Pædobaptists can satisfy themselves with what even to them is merely a constructive obedience. He recognizes the fact, however, that they so satisfy themselves, and he cheerfully admits that they act conscientiously. He is, therefore, free, and he is glad, to enter into spiritual communion with them as Christians. This he does habitually and without reserve. He merely abstains from a particular symbol of communion in what he believes to be a sentiment of paramount loyalty to his Lord.

Since Pædobaptists thus accept from themselves the spirit of obedience without the fact of obedience in relation to baptism, might they not likewise accept from us the spirit of communion without the fact of

communion in relation to the Lord's Supper? In perfect good faith and in godly sincerity I desire to ask Pædobaptists, "Is not this which in venial accommodation of phrase we may call our constructive communion a full, fair response to what in strict propriety of language must be called your constructive baptism?"

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SENTIMENTAL VIEW OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BREACHES of customary ecclesiastical usage with respect to the observance of the Lord's Supper occur now and again that plainly show how needful just at present is a little wholesome self-recollection on the part of most evangelical churches as to the true idea and use of the ordinance. Besides the Romanist, the Lutheran, and the modified Zwinglian or modern Sacramentarian theory of the Eucharist, still another theory may be distinguished: there is likewise the sentimental theory. This sentimental theory may exist independently by itself; but it is more likely to exist in connection with one or another of the different theories first mentioned, imparting then to that a certain quality of its own.

Circumstances sometimes conspire to create a case of no little difficulty for susceptible temperaments. A Christian woman lies dying; she strongly desires to partake of the Lord's Supper. She is herself a believer duly baptized; friends and kindred present, however, though professed believers, have never obeyed Christ in baptism. Shall the minister provide a celebration of the Lord's Supper in such a case, and admit these unbaptized communicants? To refuse might

seem unfeeling. A case of the sort some years ago occurred, and the minister recites the case very touchingly. It was not wonderful that a man of genial sensibilities should be moved as this minister was. The exaltation of feeling to which he testifies as experienced in common by all the participants of the act was entirely natural. No doubt it was real, and no doubt it was honest. I should be the last to make light of a scene so sanctified by the most beautiful and the tenderest affections of the human heart. The mere fact that the chief incident of the occasion was a mistake—a serious mistake even, considering the serious sequel of the principles involved,—this fact does not make the occasion a fit subject for jest or for very severe reprobation. The high-wrought emotions of that select and solemn hour were, doubtless, genuine; they may, too, have had some substantial effect of edification on the participants. But to grant this is by no means to grant that the act itself was a proper one. The sweet transfigured sentiment was no illusion; but the notion that this sentiment depended on the particular act of communion in bread and wine as its condition,—such a notion, by whomsoever entertained, is, I believe, an illusion.

I should not need to be a Baptist to say this. But this minister was a Baptist. He was a liberal Baptist, but he did not believe in the baptism of infants. Let me propose a question. Suppose that dying Christian woman had been the mother of an infant child; suppose that early education and long prepossession had reasserted their power at that supreme moment over

her mind and her conscience, and that, though now herself a Baptist by profession, she had earnestly wished to see her little one consecrated to a covenant-keeping God in the rite of baptism; suppose, once more, that our Baptist minister had yielded to this pathetic wish of the dying mother, and had consented to sprinkle the precious drops of that sparkling chrism on the unconscious forehead of the child, while those true friends and lovers of the woman stood round to witness and to weep. Now, does any one doubt that this imaginary occasion would have been marked by the same access of beautiful emotion on the part of the company as made the real occasion so touching and so memorable to them all? But a true minister would not allow himself to be thus convinced that God had thereby set his seal to the rite of infant baptism as truly of his appointment. He would not accept his own sympathetic emotions as the unmistakable voucher of the divine approval of his part in the act. He would easily perceive in such a case that there was a completely satisfactory way of accounting for his exceptional inward experiences, his own and his companions', without resort to the supposition of a supernatural cause. It was sympathy, purely human sympathy, rendered some degrees more deep and more solemn by the consciousness of all that one, at least, of their number associated the act, however mistakenly, with the idea of obedience to Christ in a positive or external ordinance of his. In other words, the origin of the emotion in the case supposed would be purely sentimental. And such I believe to have

been the origin of the emotion in the case which actually occurred. The minister acted, unconsciously, on the sentimental theory of the Lord's Supper.

He made a mistake, for the sentimental view of the Lord's Supper is radically wrong. It quite changes the relative place of Christ and the believer. It is Ptolemaic, and not Copernican: it unawares puts the believer instead of Christ in the centre of the system. It subjects Christ's ordinance to the Christian, instead of subjecting the Christian to the ordinance of Christ. Now, in a certain sense the sun was made for the earth, but the sun can be more useful to the earth when the earth moves and the sun stands still. And so the ordinances of Christ were in a certain sense made for the Christian, but the Christian is always better served by the ordinances when he is himself in the attitude of a servant to them. This is especially true of the positive or external ordinances of Christ. That a distinguishing grace is given to the believer in connection with these ordinances I fully believe; but this distinguishing grace is given, not to the act, but to the obedience in the act. The ordinance is not a sort of sacred spell to conjure with; it is not a secret entrusted to the believer, by which he may at will command, as if by a certain art of holy legerdemain, the peculiar grace divinely pronounced upon the ordinance. It *is* an *ordinance*—that is, a command. Like other commands, it is to be obeyed; but, unlike the moral commands, it is in its nature not susceptible of habitual—that is, incessant—obedience. It can only be obeyed occasionally. The occasions of

obedience are to be determined by New-Testament precedents and by the evident nature of the ordinance itself. To create occasions in self-indulgent compliance with our own capricious humors of religious feeling is to subject the ordinance to ourselves, instead of subjecting ourselves to the ordinance; it is to seek the grace through the act, and not through the obedience in the act. This principle, once admitted, would render it equally proper to celebrate the Lord's Supper upon occasions so frequent that it would be impossible to name or to number them. The obvious tendency would be toward a curious sort of sentimental ritualism that might easily grow into a burden of observance, of will-worship, too grievous to be borne.

A church might meet, at least by representatives of its number, in the room of a member drawing near to death, and there celebrate with him the Lord's Supper. Such a meeting not unfrequently is held for prayer or praise. But there must be no idea, on the part of any, that this celebration has a magical virtue in it. If some trace of such a false idea be observable in the mind of the dying person, then I would have the pastor first remove this, and not enter upon the observance of the rite until it was made perfectly clear to all that the Lord's Supper is in no wise efficacious or more appropriate than, for instance, a commendatory prayer or a convoying hymn as a preparation for death. The danger—a vital one—to be guarded against is that the dying person will look upon the Supper as a kind of viaticum for the parting soul on its last journey. There

is superstition in the sentiment to be scrupulously exorcised. But, at all events, such an occasion should not be admitted to dispense any other participant, more than it dispensed the dying man himself, from the obligation, which almost all denominations agree to recognize as universally binding, to have been previously *baptized.*

At all times, and never more heedfully than at the dying moment of the believer, it is the Christian pastor's obvious duty to remove every other prop from the disciple's faith, and let him lean and sink, however far, until he rests and is strong leaning full on the arm of his Beloved. It may be kind, but it is not wisely kind, to let anything, then at least, come between the believer and his Lord. There is something still better than an ordinance of Christ: it is CHRIST.

CHAPTER XXV.

"CLOSE COMMUNION" AS A METHOD OF PROPAGANDISM.

THE continued—perhaps increasing—sensitiveness of the Pædobaptist communities respecting the seclusive attitude assumed by most American Baptist churches in their observance of the Lord's Supper becomes to those Baptist churches a constantly strengthening reason for persisting courageously and hopefully in their now well-established practice of "close communion," so called. This is not because the average Baptist is less alive than the average Christian, in general, to the pleasure of being on excellent reciprocal terms of companionship with his fellows. The earnest Baptist sectary possesses as much as his neighbor, Pædobaptist or worldling, of that amicable disposition, sometimes a virtue and sometimes a vice, which perpetually inclines us all to enjoy being complaisant and agreeable to our friends and acquaintances. But, mistakenly or otherwise, the strenuous American Baptist has conscientiously made up his mind that Providence has committed to his hands a custody and a championship of an important imperilled ordinance of his Lord. To maintain a conspicuous, incessant, organic testimony on behalf of this ordinance is to the American Baptist

—that is, Baptist by conviction, and not merely by prescription—a leading reason of existence for his church as a member of a distinct denominational body.

It is the practical problem proposed by Providence to the Baptist churches of America in what way most effectively, and at the same time least offensively, they may articulate their testimony to the integrity and purity of the ordinance of baptism—with respect to its own unalterable nature, indeed, but much more with respect to its subjects—and preserve the ordinance as they vividly believe that it was once delivered to the saints by the Lord himself, and after him by his inspired apostles.

Such being their problem, as the Baptist churches of the land long ago felt compelled to accept it at the hands of their Lord (for, whether they were beside themselves, it was to God), two solutions were open to their choice. They might either limit themselves to the iteration of their testimony by simple word of mouth, or they might adopt a less importunate method in some form of significant silence. If they should elect the oral method, they must labor under two very serious disadvantages. In the first place, they must insist in their public instructions upon the sole article of baptism to an extent far out of proportion to its true place and importance in a vast and harmonious system of scriptural truth and obedience. The effect would inevitably be to breed fanaticism or—almost as bad—to induce utter moral sterility in both speaker and hearer. In the second place, a further obvious disadvantage of the oral method would be that the testimony

so rendered would take effect only where it was not needed, and where, in such disproportionate excess, it would be positively hurtful; for, of course, Pædobaptists would not feel called to come and subject themselves as hearers to preaching like this. The effect of the oral method would thus be null where alone it was needed, while where alone it was felt it would be injurious. The sole alternative remaining to American Baptists was to withhold their testimony altogether, or else to adopt some means of testifying in silence.

For reasons that appear very cogent—indeed, quite imperative—to American Baptists, they dared not withhold their testimony altogether. They cast, therefore, about them for some habitual act that should at once and for all incorporate their testimony in a living and impressive sign, and should thus release their tongues for the more fruitful preaching of the manifold obedience of Christ.* The almost universally conceded relationship of priority between baptism and the Lord's Supper suggested to American Baptists an obvious and unmistakable means of embodying their testimony in an appropriate visible sign. With insignificant exceptions, the churches of Christendom all agreed in requiring baptism according to their ideas of baptism as the invariable antecedent of the Lord's Supper. The Baptists, in like just consistency with their own views of what baptism is, both as to its nature and especially as to its subjects, had only to do

* I am, of course, giving here not the history, but the rationale, of "close communion." As a matter of fact, "close communion" among Baptists in America is an inheritance from Great Britain.

precisely the same thing with all Christendom besides, and already their duty of testimony was accomplished at a stroke, and was also set in constant course of accomplishment. An occasional utterance to interpret and vindicate their conduct to themselves and to their brethren, and they might otherwise join heart and hand with all that loved their Lord together with themselves in every act of a common obedience to his will. It seemed absolutely the most loyal and the least obtrusive method conceivable of fulfilling the mission which they solemnly believed that they, as a denomination of Christians, had received from their Master. They could not do less; they need not do more.

Let generous Pædobaptists be sure that their Baptist brethren are deeply, immovably in earnest about this. Baptists do intensely believe that their Pædobaptist brethren are wrong here, and, being here wrong, are wrong at a point that is incalculably important, if it be not even absolutely essential, to the life of the kingdom of Christ among men. This Baptists believe, and they cannot believe otherwise. Is it anything more than a fair tolerance of different belief for Pædobaptists to allow Baptists to publish their convictions; to publish them by a negative act of simply abstaining; to publish them in a way that infringes no fellow-Christian's liberty, but merely imposes, instead, a check upon their own strong natural impulses to self-indulging, sentimental good-fellowship,—is so much concession as this of freedom to Baptists anything more, I ask, than a just measure of humane comity, of Christian charity? Baptists certainly think as they do

think about Pædobaptists, but they would love Pædobaptists none the less for being magnanimously permitted to express their thoughts about them. What is called "close communion" in one important view of the subject is simply an organized method of propagandism for beliefs and practices that Baptists will assuredly never give up, and that for the sake of their brethren, of the world, and of Christ they are very unwilling to hold to alone. They are sorry that their testimony is unwelcome to any, but they are thankfully glad that, at least, it makes its impression. They join with heart in the prayer of many for the advent of that day when there shall be "one flock, one Shepherd."

CHAPTER XXVI.

BAPTIST VERNACULAR.

EVERY separate set of distinctive fundamental ideas, in whatever sphere of thought, tends to appropriate for itself a certain distinguishable mode of expression, which may be called its dialect or vernacular. This is true in morals, in social science, in politics, in philosophy, in literature, and it is no less true in religion. There is a contrasted and recognizable use of language natural and normal to each one of all the existing sects or denominations of Christians. It is in this sense of the phrase that I write in the heading to the present chapter "Baptist Vernacular." I mean by it that well-defined selection and adaptation of words by which the thoroughbred and well-instructed Baptist expresses the ideas peculiar to his school of religious opinion.

This, like every other established vernacular, possesses an idiom and an accent which are very sensitive and very exacting. It is exceedingly easy for a man who was not born to it or who has not been bred in it—who, in fact, does not speak it as his mother-tongue—to make a foreigner's mistake in attempting to use it. I wish to point out one such slip in Baptist vernacular that I have observed during recent news-

paper controversy on the subject of "close communion," so called. Of course, I refer to a choice of phraseology exemplified in writers assuming to express themselves as regular Baptists. I raise no question as to the absolute sincerity and candor of the writers alluded to; I do not wish to mention any writer by name. Indeed, the discussion may better be quite impersonal and anonymous. I purposely imply by using the word "slip" here that the deviation from just Baptist idiom under present remark is unintentional, and even unwitting, on the part of such as have made it.

It is not pure Baptist vernacular to discuss matters of religious usage as questions of individual right appertaining or not to the Christian. I do not now say that the Christian has no "rights" in the sense, whatever the sense may be, in which that word is thus employed in religious discussion. But it is not good Baptist vernacular so to employ the word: the word assumes the wrong point of view; it is not just to the true controlling Baptist idea. The true controlling Baptist idea is duty, not right. The proper point of view puts the Lord, and not the disciple, in the centre. Baptists, in as far as they are ideal—that is, consistent—Baptists, occupy themselves, not with claiming or with conceding individual rights, but with obeying their Lord. It betrays the unconscious presence and influence of different controlling ideas—ideas not only not Baptist, but intensely anti-Baptist—when a man naturally falls to talking of individual rights in discussing points of religious observance.

Besides this, to use the word "right" as it is sometimes thus used by persons assuming to speak in the character of Baptists is yet otherwise a slip in Baptist vernacular. True Baptist vernacular is, at least, intelligible and clear; but the word "right," thus used, is hopelessly vague and ambiguous. "Right" is a relative word. When you say, for example, that the believer has a "right" to sit at the Lord's Table, what do you mean? You mean that he has a "just claim" to do so. If I have a just claim, it must be a claim upon some one. But "claim" here upon whom? "Claim" upon Christ? If so, it is then Christ's duty to provide for the believer a seat at his table. What makes it such? Some voluntary engagement, it must be, undertaken by Christ. Where has Christ undertaken any engagement of this sort? Impliedly, it may be said, in the command, "Do this in remembrance of me." Granted. But to whom was this command addressed? We must answer this question before we can decide with whom, if with any, Christ has engaged himself to provide for them a seat at his table. It was addressed to men that had believed. True. But also to men that had been baptized.

It is no assumption to say that Christ's apostles had been baptized, any more than it is to say that they believed in Christ—indeed, not so much. True, it is inconceivable that they did not all believe, or profess to believe, in him; they would not have been present otherwise. But no more would they have been present if they had not been baptized. Christ himself, to make his own example perfect, had submitted to baptism.

He afterward baptized either with his own hands or by the hands of his disciples, and he most solemnly enjoined baptism as the very first duty of discipleship. Is it possible to thought that Jesus, having first scrupulously been baptized himself, should then have had baptism administered to others by those who themselves had never been baptized? Granted it is nowhere expressly said that every one of the apostles was baptized. Neither is it anywhere expressly said that every one of the apostles believed. Indeed, Judas, we know, did not, in the true sense of belief, although he no doubt had been baptized, for baptism was the invariable profession and badge of discipleship. If, then, the application of the command, "Do this in remembrance of me"—in other words the ordinance [command] of the Lord's Supper—is not limited in its original intention by the qualification in participants of baptism, it is not limited, either, by the qualification in them of faith. In fact, no qualification whatever, then, can be named that should limit it. It is, then, indiscriminately and universally binding on all men everywhere, without reference to their character or their conduct. This would be "open communion" in its only true logical comprehension.

But perhaps the word "right" in the formula that the "believer has a right" to a seat at the Lord's Table means "just claim," not upon Christ, but upon fellow-believers. I, then, as a believer, in that character simply have a "just claim" upon my fellow-believers to enjoy, under their provision and at their expense, a seat with them at the table of the Lord. Does this

notion, thus frankly stated, need any discussion? Would not an admiration-point after it be enough? Why, if it is my fellow-believers' duty to provide for me a seat at the Lord's Table, it must have been made their duty by some ordinance to that effect created by Christ. Where is there such an ordinance? It does not exist in any form, express or implicit. It could not by any possibility exist in a book like the Bible, where common sense is as omnipresent as is inspiration. If "right" is predicated only in the extremely imperfect sense of the believer's "just claim" not to be actively prevented by fellow-believers from sitting at the Lord's Table somewhere, under suitable conditions, why then nobody in this free country disputes the "believer's right" to do that, and the discussion ends exactly where it began. Baptists never question Pædobaptists' right to celebrate the Lord's Supper in this sense of the word "*right*." Pædobaptists have, no doubt, a perfectly just claim on Baptists not to be hindered by them; and Baptists always respect the claim. Baptists have at different times been very much embarrassed themselves by others in this respect, but I never heard of others being at all embarrassed by Baptists, and I presume I never shall hear of such a thing.

If Christians would consistently restrict themselves to thinking of duty, and refuse to indulge themselves in thinking of *rights* with regard to the Lord's Supper, there would speedily come an end to controversies on the subject of "close" and "open" communion. There is just one command bearing on the point: "Do this in remembrance of me." Let us all attend to obeying:

that will solve the problem at once. The commands of Christ are all of them equally binding, and equally binding upon all. In a true and in a very solemn sense the command, "Do this in remembrance of me," is binding upon every sinner as much as upon any Christian, and as much as the command, "Repent." But there is a natural order of obedience. It is obviously the intention of Christ that all who partake of the Supper shall first have repented; but quite as obviously it is Christ's intention that all who participate in the Supper shall first have been baptized. If I think I have been baptized, that does not fulfil the purpose of Christ, unless my thought corresponds with the fact. My thought, however mistaken, may, indeed, make it my individual duty to act accordingly, and, though unbaptized, obey the ordinance of the Supper; but if your thought is different, and more just, perhaps, than mine, you certainly have no duty to encourage me in my mistake either by word or by deed. Nay, it is then your duty to disturb my false persuasion, or persuasion believed by you to be false, in every suitable way of moral influence.

Exactly thus Baptists do toward Pædobaptists by their much-misunderstood practice of "close communion," so called. There is no precept bidding us to sit down to the Lord's Table with those whom we believe not to have been baptized; there is a precept that we should teach others to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. This we try to do, and a part of our method consists in what is commonly called "close communion." We have reason

to thank God that he is pleased to make it in such a measure successful. What God has rendered our duty, let our fellow-Christians at least concede to be our "right."

There is a second mistake in dialect much like the first, but still different enough to deserve separate mention. Indeed, the very likeness of it to the first requires that it be discriminated from that in order to be recognized as really another mistake, and not the same. The mistake is calling the Lord's Supper a "privilege," in contrast with baptism conceived as of a "duty." Now, strictly and scripturally speaking, what warrant have we to make such a distinction as this between baptism and the Supper? None whatever, as I fully believe. Of baptism and of the Supper, each one equally, it may be said that it is at the same time both a duty and a privilege. Let us have done distinguishing between the commands of our Lord in this invidious way. True privilege to the Christian is ever the privilege of obeying his Lord. If a Christian professor finds himself enjoying in the Lord's Supper a pleasure different from this, he may well stop and inquire, "Is my joy genuine? Is there not some adulteration of mere sentiment in it?" What Baptist pastor is there who will not testify that there has occurred in his experience many and many a case of joy on the part of the convert in the act of being baptized not less, certainly, than that which attended afterward the same convert's participation of bread and wine at the table of the Lord? Charles Wesley never had a truer inspiration than when he wrote,

"Oh, how happy are they
Who their Saviour obey!"

In truth, the joy of obedience is often greatest in triumphing over the natural choice of the heart and turning what *was* a duty into a privilege. The relation between Obedience and her Lord is a beautiful relation—beautiful and blessed. His statutes are her *song;* Obedience sings them all—not some of them, but *all* of them. Baptism is to her a privilege as much as is the Lord's Supper.

Let us take care of our dialect. Let us cease talking so much of our rights and talk more of our duties. Let us beware how we choose among the commandments, calling this a privilege, that a duty. Finally, let us pay no heed to speaking pure "Baptist," and all heed to speaking pure Christian. For what is good Baptist dialect if it be not good Christian dialect? Nothing, nothing, nothing in the world, but jargon and a strife of tongues.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE CURRENT BAPTIST CRISIS.

THERE is no current Baptist crisis. What appears to be such is such only in appearance; it is purely factitious. The Baptist denomination in this country was never more solidly of one mind and one heart on the question of "close or open communion," so called, than it is now. There always have been some spirits among us inclined by education, or perhaps by constitution, to desire more play for their religious sensibilities than the general Baptist usage and tradition in America admit; there are such spirits to-day. No valid reason exists for believing that they are more numerous or more enthusiastic or more influential at the actual moment than they were a year ago or ten years ago. The great Baptist denomination has always been strong enough and generous enough to bear with these brethren, and to honor them, too, for what they were, at the same time that it recognized clearly what they were not, and regretted it, chiefly for their own sake. That is as much the case yet as it ever has been. The resultant disposition of us all will certainly be, to give those warm-hearted brethren of our faith plenty of room and verge to be at home in our tabernacles while they sti l remain precisely what

they cannot very well help remaining. They will simply have to feel a little more constraint than they will like to feel in their ways of propagating their sentiments. This is certain to be the end of the present factitious crisis. I give here one among many reasons for my conviction.

In the first place, the whole matter with "Open-Communion" Baptists is to a great extent a matter of temperament. The logic is all on one side of the question. It is *feeling*—stronger than reason—that makes any Baptist in this country an "Open-Communion" Baptist. Now, we are all of us at times subject to accesses of feeling that overbear our convictions for the moment, and so for the moment control our conduct. But there are not many of us that experience this habitually and constantly; those of us who do are sentimentalists. But sentimentalists are not in the majority among Baptists; they are not even in a very numerous minority. Most Baptists are Baptists on principle, and not by sentiment. It will never be otherwise; the nature of the case forbids it. It is only as it were by chance that a sentimentalist strays into the camp of the Baptists. The sentiments, as far as sentiments are distinct from judgment, tend, in a large majority of instances, to make men anything else in religion rather than Baptists. Thus Baptists are the best sifted, perhaps, among all modern denominations of Christians.

Now, I desire to guard my language against misapprehension. I use the word "sentimentalists" not in the way of levity, nor in the way of reproach. I use

it simply for what it means—to note that class of persons who in any particular are led by their feelings rather than by their judgment. There may be exceptions, but the exceptions are very few; and I know of no exceptions to the rule that among regular American Baptists those who hold "open-communion" views hold them as sentiments rather than convictions. This, I am well aware, might be admitted for true without its being admitted that therefore the views thus held as sentiments were not just views, and views quite worthy of being held as convictions. Of course, too, "convictions" are not certainly right, any more than "sentiments" are certainly wrong. I am fully of the opinion that sound sentiments will always chime with sound convictions.

I should heartily consent to a Christian's being led by his sentiments, provided only his sentiments had chief regard, as they should have, to his Lord Christ, and a regard strictly subordinate, as their regard should be, first to himself, and secondly to his fellows. The trouble with the sentiments as sovereign of conduct in religion is, that they are very apt to rule too much in the interest of indulgence toward self and of complaisance toward others, and too little in the interest of simple obedience toward Christ.

A prominent young minister of the Baptist denomination lately furnished a conspicuous illustration of my meaning. This minister would be the last man, probably, to suspect himself of being a sentimentalist, and I should be the last man to call him a sentimentalist in any offensive meaning of the word. But,

in a published sermon on the subject of the Lord's Supper, he used the following language at the point of culmination in the interest and power of what he said:

"If a Presbyterian or a Methodist come within these walls on the day of communion, and should feel his heart so moved by the services as to have at the close a deep yearning to remain and complete the hour's worship by showing forth the Lord's death in the use of this loaf and cup, I maintain that no courtesy of an invitation is needed. The requirements of his spiritual nature are supreme. He possesses an inalienable RIGHT, in the silence of the ordinance, to proclaim and ratify his love. . . . And if, in the providence of God, I should be cast, as so many men frequently are, where I should find myself in a church not of my own faith, and the same inward yearning should come to my heart, I should assuredly use my personal liberty, denying most emphatically the authority of any body of men to call me to account."

Most Pædobaptist readers of the sermon will, of course, approve these sentiments. Few, however, Baptists or Pædobaptists, will approve the reasons given for holding the sentiments. What I particularly call attention to is this: How exactly in the dialect of sentimentalism the foregoing quotation is expressed—"should *feel* his *heart* so *moved*," "deep *yearning*," "the requirements of his spiritual nature are supreme," "possesses an inalienable RIGHT," "*inward yearning* should come to my *heart*," "should assuredly use *my personal liberty*"! The question is not at this moment

whether the acts of intercommunion spoken of are right. Granted that they are right, what makes them right? Why, according to this sermon, "feeling," having the "heart" "moved," "deep yearning," "requirements" of the "spiritual nature," "personal liberty." This is pure sentimentalism; it is guidance by the feelings. If one *feels* in a certain way, he has an "inalienable RIGHT" to do a certain thing which he wants to do, and for no reason that appears but the feeling. Now, however valuable intrinsically "feelings" may be as guides in religious conduct, one thing is certain, and that thing is this: Baptists are not the people to accept their guidance. It has always been a characteristic of Baptists, as matter of theory at least, to walk by principle, and not by feelings. They are, I believe, the most numerous denomination of Christians in America. (I do not except the Methodists in saying this, although I should perhaps exclude from consideration the "probationers," so called, of the Methodist body.) But I venture to say that there are as few religious sentimentalists among American Baptists as among the members of any other American denomination whatever. It is, therefore, utterly useless to anticipate a fundamental change in their denominational usages as the result of sentimental considerations. We Baptists may change our practices in some respects, but when we do it will be because our judgment is convinced, not because our "feelings" overmaster us.

I do not mean that there will not be occasional instances of individual deviation from established Baptist customs; no doubt there will be. There are some—

perhaps many—among us who, under strong pressure of temporary emotion, would assert their independence in conduct. These aberrations would seldom, however, be made matter of very serious ecclesiastical inquiry, much less of severe vindicatory discipline. They would simply be overlooked, or else would furnish occasion of seasonable pastoral instruction and invigorating exhortation to fidelity. The important point of difference is, that these infractions of usage will never be commended by representative Baptist ministers as matter of "inalienable RIGHT," nor accepted for such by representative Baptist churches. They would rather be treated as weaknesses, comparatively trivial weaknesses, however, Baptist common sense generally refusing to yield to the victims of them the honors of martyrdom—martyrdom for "feelings."

I again insist that I by no means despise "feelings:" they are equally honorable with judgment. But either "feelings" or judgment must be right to be deserving of honor. There are religious sentimentalists whom I esteem very highly, almost revere. The author of the sermon under comment alludes to one such. It is the woman with the alabaster box of costly ointment. She was evidently a woman of sentiment all compact, but it was right sentiment. For this was its distinguishing characteristic. It made nothing of self, and all of Christ. It lavished a large sum—perhaps a whole fortune for its possessor—in one self-sacrificing act of devotion to the Lord. Before such sentimentalism as this I wellnigh worship and bow down. But the sentimentalism recommended in this sermon is of a different

quality. It regards Christ too little and self too much. This is constantly the besetting danger of "feelings" as the guide of conduct. "Shall I break the ritual order," the preacher asks, "or impoverish my soul?" And answers "emphatically," with the emphasis of italics, "*Break the ritual order,* and from the broken alabaster vase let the perfume of a loving heart ascend to God."

A "ritual order," observe, is here recognized—that is, an order divinely intended as between baptism and the Lord's Supper. That order is, baptism before the Supper. In an earlier part of the discourse this divinely intended precedence of baptism is strongly insisted upon; here, however, he says, "*Break the ritual order.*" Most Pædobaptists recognize the same "ritual order." A few Pædobaptists deny it or ignore it. None, so far as I know, advise to "*break*" it. Baptists as little certainly as Pædobaptists will be found ready to follow the revolutionary advice.

But note the violent contrast between the sentimentalism thus avowed and inculcated by the preacher, and the sentimentalism of the woman alluded to in the preacher's metaphor.

She broke — perhaps "unsealed" — an "alabaster box," to be sure. But the box was her own, and she had a right to break it. The "ritual order" that the sermon says "break" is the Lord's, not ours. It is as if the woman had found an alabaster box belonging to the human Christ, and in the ecstasy of self-indulging love had ventured to break it for anointing him at his own expense. That act might have been forgiven, but

it would hardly have been commended. It would assuredly have borne a widely different character from that of the act which was really performed. The woman sacrificed what was her own to serve her Lord. We are advised to sacrifice what is our Lord's to serve ourselves; for this it means to break a "ritual order" that he has appointed, lest, forsooth, we "impoverish" our "souls" by keeping it. But the metaphor misleads in still another way. The "ritual order" is not a "vase" that holds the "perfume of a loving heart." It may, indeed, be considered a "vase;" but then what the vase holds is something more precious far than any emotion, however holy, of a human heart. It holds a thought of God's—a thought which we mutilate when we break the vase that holds it. The incense of right love to God is imprisoned by no ritual walls. It ascends continually, and never so straight and so swift as by the way of obedience. It were a shame to suppose that the "perfume of a loving heart" could be obstructed in its ascent to God by a recognized obligation to keep any one even of his least commandments. Sacrificed "feelings" often burn a sweeter incense to Christ than "feelings" indulged. Better keep the "ritual order" for Christ's sake than break it for your own.

Of such religious sentimentalism, the sentimentalism that denies self to confess the Lord—of such genuine religious sentimentalism, I say, May we all of us, Baptists and Pædobaptists together, have more and more!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE FUTURE OF "OPEN COMMUNION" AMONG AMERICAN BAPTISTS.

SO much has been said, by those with whom the wish perhaps is father to the thought, about the imminent prospect of a general breaking up of the traditional practice of the American Baptist churches with respect to restriction of the Lord's Supper, that it may be worth while to inquire coolly and candidly what, in fact, are the really determining elements of wise prediction in the case. Mere unfounded conjecture amounts to very little; bold prediction, chiefly designed to help bring about its own fulfilment, amounts to still less. To collect and weigh a few of the considerations belonging to the question that are truly significant and decisive,—this is the sole purpose of the present chapter. Whether restriction of the Lord's Supper is inherently a good thing or not, is not here to be discussed. The matter now to be examined is the following: What reasons are there in the actual aspect of things to lead us to anticipate a speedy change of the prevailing Baptist practice in respect to the Lord's Supper? Are there any such reasons? Let us see:

In the first place, there are no statistics obtainable to show the present relative numerical strength of the par-

ties within the Baptist denomination in America that respectively favor and oppose the restriction of the Lord's Supper. Obviously, therefore, we shall have to rely for our estimate of future probabilities upon other indications. Other indications are not wanting.

There are the leading Baptist seats of learning; on which side will the influence of these be found to be exerted? Whatever may be the views of those who compose the present Baptist ministry, the future of the question of restriction, so far as this is to be decided by accredited public religious teachers, may be supposed to lie chiefly with those who are now studying in preparation to become Baptist ministers. Under what influences as to this question are Baptist ministerial students pursuing their studies? Are we perhaps to look for a change to relaxed views on the part of Baptists in the next generation, resulting from the comparatively slow, but eventually potent, effect of training now being received at the various seats of higher learning in the hands of the Baptist denomination? What are the facts?

The facts, as I believe, are these: There is no college whatsoever belonging to Baptists, North or South—Baptists, I mean, of the so-called regular order—that is not presided over by a man committed by intimate personal conviction, by persuasion of expediency, or at least by equally controlling antecedent public record, to maintain restriction of the Lord's Supper as the practice of Baptists. More: if there is any Baptist college in which a single member of the faculty of instructors makes a contrary influence felt, I do not know what

college it is. The positive influence exerted through example and through teaching by college instructors on their students is all exerted in one direction: it is exerted toward keeping the lines now drawn as taut and tense as ever. I do not mean to say that direct efforts are made in ordinary and regular college education to mould the opinion of undergraduates on this subject. But whatever force there is in tradition, and whatever force in vigorous public advocacy well known to be exerted by college teachers outside of college teaching, this force is given solid and strong in favor of maintaining things as they are.

Of the theological seminaries, the same and more may be said. I do not presume to speak with absolute authority, but this I fully believe to be true—that all Baptist theological seminaries in the country teach, without faltering and without reserve, the theory and the practice of restricting the Lord's Supper to baptized believers. Of course, students may think as they please and act as they please; they may, if they please, differ with their instructors on this point, as on others. Such privilege of dissent some of them freely exercise. Some of them, I say; but the number, I am fully persuaded, is very small. The public opinion in these places, beyond doubt, is overwhelmingly in favor of conservatism. If what I say is said too strongly, it is easy for some one who knows better to contradict me. I run my risk of contradiction. I do so without fear.

What is true of the faculties of instruction at these seats of higher education is, if possible, more emphat-

ically true of the corporators and founders that control them. The men who give to endow Baptist institutions are generally men of convictions. Such men do not give money to have their convictions opposed, but to have them maintained and propagated. If they tax themselves to endow college or seminary, they claim, and they get, their share of representation in the administration of seminary or college. Just or not, this is what happens. For my part, I think that here what happens is just. I know of no instance in which the management of a Baptist institution of higher learning is not unquestioningly committed to a sound conservatism on the point now in question. In every way, therefore, it is, I believe, beyond dispute that these institutions are pledged and mortgaged securely, for many years to come, to the part of restricted communion.

I speak of this state of affairs, not now as symptomatic of the set of present public opinion among Baptists on the question, but rather as a condition creative of Baptist public opinion for the future.

There is another educational force at work upon the forming mind of the younger generation of Baptists not less effective than that exerted by institutions of learning: this force is the denominational periodical press. Count over the papers devoted to Baptist views, and where is the one, the single one, that would consent to be called "open communion" in its convictions or its tendencies? I know not of a solitary instance among the whole number. This fact is of course indicative of existing denominational opinion; but, more

pregnantly still, it notes an influence, omnipresent and penetrating like the atmosphere, that broods day and night over the general mind and conscience of Baptists. There may be a reaction, and the reaction may be irresistible when it comes. But is it likely to come this year or the next? Is it likely to come in our time? The prognostics certainly do not favor the conjecture.

An additional fact: There is no disputing that among the hundreds of thousands of American Baptists there have been some who at least have been lukewarm in their adhesion to strict Baptist views. Of this number some have been ministers. Of these ministers, most have preserved the silence becoming in those who have no vehement convictions compelling them to speak; a few from time to time have spoken out. Now, the sequel of the outspeaking of such is instructive. With no exception, one of two things will be found to have occurred: either the dissident has enlarged gradually the arc of his aberration from regular views until the centrifugal force that started him on his path of eccentricity has flung him quite outside of his original orbit, and ended by attaching him finally to a foreign ecclesiastical system—conspicuous instances are recent—or else the dissident, recoiling from the logical consequences of his liberal departure and redressing the violent flexures of his movement, has returned obediently to his proper place and relations. Seldom, very seldom, has the "open-communion" Baptist minister, who, having the courage and the conscience of his convictions, has

openly sought to make them prevail, succeeded in maintaining his position as pastor unimpaired. More seldom still—has it ever even once occurred?—has he succeeded in bringing his church over to the permanent adoption of his views. The sequel of these lax sentiments, when active and aggressive enough to pronounce themselves, proves almost always powerfully deterrent to such as might otherwise be tempted to follow. It may safely be said that the grip of the Baptist denomination on their established doctrine and usage in regard to the Lord's Supper is stronger to-day than before, not so much in spite of certain intra-denominational movements in favor of so-called "open communion" as because of those movements. There is more of intelligence and heart now, less of mere habit and tradition, in the fidelity with which American Baptists cling to their principles. This is in some part due to fresh discussions provoked by the movements within Baptist ranks in favor of a change in their practices. In yet greater part it is due to the warning thought to have been discovered in the course of those few more prominent Baptist ministers who, having begun by efforts to change the views and usage of the denomination, have ended their fruitless efforts by ceasing to be Baptists.

In view of numerous perfectly unquestionable indications such as those which have now been set forth, what chance, to the rational eye, remains of an encouraging future nigh at hand for "open communion" among American Baptists? Barely one: our strength may turn out to be our weakness. Young Baptist

ministers may come to understand that "open communion" is a road so sure and so short to loss of position as pastors that at length subscription to the stricter tenet will become a matter, not of conviction, but of convention. Thus, in the space of a generation or so, lack of discussion may leave the Baptist minister unbraced to resist the constant penetrating and relaxing influence of extra-denominational environment. Then a breaking up of the old lines may take place, to be succeeded by a new stretching and fixing of them when the disastrous consequences of letting them go have had time to exhibit themselves. Meantime, the most probable thing is that individual instances of laxness will continue to occur about as often as necessary to make us seasonably strong and vigilant beforehand.

Their views in regard to the qualifications for admission to the Lord's Supper may be a mistake on the part of American Baptists; but, at all events, the mistake is very deeply anchored. To remove it would be no light task even for strong hands, and even for a good many strong hands working at once and together. Granted, however, that it is a mistake, would it be worth while for a band of strong men to spend their strength in trying to remove it? Is there not better work for such men to do? I have heard Mr. Spurgeon credited with the remark that, "open-communionist" though he is, still, were he to be a minister in America, he should not seek to change the fixed practice of American Baptists. The remark struck me as eminently worthy of that sturdy common

sense in the great English preacher which, not less than his fecund and manifold genius, is an attribute of his remarkable character. The case with us is manifestly one in which the living force of exertion would be very wastefully spent in overcoming the vast inertia of conservatism. This is especially true, seeing that in the present instance the inertia of conservatism has an astonishingly obstinate habit of rousing itself, upon occasion, into a multiplied energy of resistance and aggression.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION HYGIENICALLY CONSIDERED.

THERE are several different ways in which the health and vigor of any organism may approximately be tested. Of these different ways, I here mention three:

First, you may observe the capacity of the organism to expel from itself elements entering it that are essentially foreign and unassimilable.

Secondly, you may observe its capacity to assimilate and incorporate elements that properly belong to its structure.

Thirdly, you may observe its capacity to endure without serious injury to itself the intrusion and presence of elements that resist its assimilative and appropriative activity.

I propose that we apply these three tests successively to the Baptist denomination in America, with a view to estimating in what degree that denomination may be supposed still to possess the vigor of survival and growth.

Let us begin with that test of vitality which consists in the capacity of an organism to rid itself of intruding elements essentially foreign to its constitu-

tion. I do not now mean the ability to do this in the exercise of a desperate paroxysmal effort by which the organism itself may be almost fatally convulsed; I refer rather to the quiet, orderly, normal, and habitual processes of life, in virtue of which, without strain to the body, the element that has entered it, but does not properly belong to it, is gently and decisively rejected. When there is a kind of convulsive agony of expulsion exerted—as, for example, in the case of a deadly poison, between which and the very secret of life there is suddenly waged a balanced and doubtful duel—that is a sign of vitality, to be sure, but of vitality in danger of being overpowered. On the other hand, if the progress of the functions of life is so steady and strong as to persist, unconscious of impediment, without intermission, like the working of mechanism regulated by a balance-wheel heavy enough to supply momentum constantly more than equal to any resistance,—if, I say, the vital progress is thus steady and strong, flinging off easily and with no shock whatever proves not to be homogeneous with the structure of the organism, why, then the health and vigor of that organism are shown to be pretty much everything that could be desired.

It would be more simple and natural to proceed with the application of our test in the present case by mentioning individual illustrative instances. These it would be very easy to adduce, but it might seem invidious, and I forbear. Each reader will supply illustrations for himself. Certain it is that the Baptist denomination in America has manifested a remarkable capacity to

eliminate elements irreducibly foreign which had for a time attached themselves to it, and which during that time imposed upon a wide public of observers, as well as, very likely, also upon themselves, the impression that they actually belonged to its body. Again and again within a decade of years, not to go farther back, it has fallen out that ministers calling themselves Baptist, and no doubt supposing themselves Baptist, having gone through a period of restlessness within the pale of the denomination (the denomination itself so calm, meantime, as doubtless still further to disturb these uneasy souls with the contrast of its own repose and immobility, refusing to feel their agitation, much more to partake of it), have, at length, found themselves insensibly projected along the line of their own tangential inclinations quite without the orbit of the parent body—all in a manner to have transmitted scarce reactive sensation enough behind them to apprise that body that anything had been happening to any one. It was the self-conserving force of the denomination naturally and normally disposing of elements that were not of it and that could not contribute to its strength. These brethren went forth from us because they were not of us. They would have remained, but that the body did not need them and freely let them go; they were out of their true place among us. This we knew better than they knew it themselves. We waited tolerantly, and they withdrew, unconsciously persuaded by our behavior to take this action of their own accord. They were completely separated and insulated within the body before they

withdrew. As, while they remained, the body was whole and sound without them, so their withdrawal was attended by no rent or schism of the body. They went quite alone, and they drew no following after them. The Baptist body is not appreciably either weaker or stronger by the change; but the change has shown the body's strength. The vitality of the denomination is proved to be vigorous enough to dismiss these ministers without violence of ejection, and certainly without violence of recoil. This is precisely as it should be with an organism full of health and strength. So much for the test of its vigor consisting in the capacity exhibited by the Baptist denomination to eliminate adventitious elements not properly belonging to its body.

But a sound organism ought to exhibit its sound condition by something more than its expulsive power exerted upon alien elements. It ought also to be capable of reducing to agreement with itself and subduing to its own nurture elements superficially disposed to resist, but, nevertheless, fundamentally adapted to experience this appropriation of themselves. Apply this test of vitality to the Baptist denomination, and you will not find the denomination wanting.

To every reflecting mind at all conversant with recent religious history instances will readily occur of Baptist ministers temporarily affected with a desire to be irregularly free in demonstration of fraternal fellowship with the unbaptized, beyond what the well-considered usage of their denomination in this country would approve, who, after a season of moral and intellectual ferment

indicative at once of honesty, of activity, and of immature conviction on their part, have cleared themselves and settled serenely down into enlightened and tranquil accord with the opinion of the majority of their brethren. These ministers were really of us, and they could not extricate themselves from us. The assimilative attraction of the great Baptist body for its own was too much for them. They yielded to the stress that was stronger. They stretched for a little the elastic bond that bound them to us, but the retractile elasticity drew them back. The test of soundness and vigor in an organism which lies in the capacity of that organism to overcome reluctance to be assimilated, displaying itself in elements that really belong to its structure, is thus completely satisfied in application to the body of American Baptists.

But, besides being equal to the task of expelling alien and hostile elements happening to adhere or intrude, and besides being equal to the task of subjugating elements essentially kindred that for a time resist assimilation, an organism really healthy and robust ought, moreover, to be able, if occasion arise, to go on thriving even though elements not friendly that have thrust themselves in obstinately remain, refusing alike to be gently rejected and to be hospitably subdued. This test of its vitality the Baptist denomination in America will well bear to have applied. The kindly strength with which the body refrains from exerting itself violently to expel, and yet imperturbably proceeds to prosper without expelling, is to him who knows how to regard it aright a most edifying spec-

tacle. The dissident brethren find themselves free within the denomination, their freedom there, however, somewhat conforming to a famous image for the freedom enjoyed by the will amid the alleged environment of fatal condition. They are, like a drop of water, fruitlessly free in the heart of a rock. That drop can move, but only within itself—by mutual interpenetration of its particles. So these brethren can agitate, but it is only themselves that they affect, and not at all the mass of the denomination that encloses them, and that encloses them without violating their freedom, while it does effectually nullify their power. They remain safely encysted, neither harmed nor harming, within the great generous body that they will not abandon and that will not expel them.

The Baptist denomination—tried by whichever one of the three tests named—is, I submit, in a fairly sound and hopeful condition.

THE END.